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COLLEGE ENGLISH

Volume 11

JANUARY 1950

Number 4

The Reputation of James Gould Cozzens

GRANVILLE HICKS¹

AMES GOULD COZZENS has been writing novels for twenty-five years, ever since he was an undergraduate at Harvard, and during much of that time he has been writing novels that individually have been highly praised. Yet, as Brendan Gill neatly put it in the *New Yorker*, "Cozzens is rarely spoken of between novels." Very little has been written about him, and he is not even mentioned in Maxwell Geismar's chapter on the novel in the *Literary History of the United States*, though three or four dozen of his contemporaries are at least named.

But of late Mr. Cozzens has acquired a champion as well as a Pulitzer prize. Whatever faults have been attributed to Bernard De Voto, he has never been called timid or wishy-washy or noncommittal. When he takes up the cudgels for a cause or a man, it is with a strong conviction that cudgels fulfil their function only if they are brought in violent contact with heads. In fact, he sometimes seems to feel that heads were made for cudgels, and not vice versa. When, therefore, Mr. De Voto found that he liked James Gould Cozzens' latest novel,

Guard of Honor, he expressed his enthusiasm for the book by belaboring the "exalted caste who are called literary critics." Because of their intellectual ineptitude and moral degradation, he wrote in *Harper's "Easy Chair,"* they had muffed the book.

As usual, Mr. De Voto was only partly wrong. He was wrong, I think, about the reviews of *Guard of Honor*: if few critics rose to his own rhapsodic heights, only two or three failed to see substantial merits in the novel. (One of the really imperceptive reviews appeared in the *Nation* and was written by Diana Trilling—an uncommonly interesting critic of fiction, given to occasional deep lapses.) On the other hand, he was right in asserting that Cozzens has had less attention from "the formulators of official literary judgment" than he deserves.

The question, except for Bernard De Voto, is not whether Cozzens is one of the great writers of our time. Mr. De Voto, so far as I can make out, is very nearly alone in thinking that he is. The question is whether there is more to be said about and for him than anyone has bothered to say. That *Guard of Honor* won the Pulitzer prize for the best novel

¹ Author of *The Great Tradition*, *Figures of Transition*, *Only One Storm*, etc.

of 1948 unfortunately doesn't mean much, for some very poor novelists have won Pulitzer prizes and some good ones haven't. (William Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust*, which was published in 1948, was ignored by the Pulitzer judges, just as all its predecessors had been.) In this instance, however, the award, which Mr. Cozzens captured with his eleventh novel, does call attention to some of the problems of literary reputation.

"My first novel was written when I was nineteen," Mr. Cozzens states in *Twentieth Century Authors*, "and that, and the next, and the next, were about what you would expect." Those three early novels of his, none of which is listed on the flyleaf of *Guard of Honor*, are now hard to come by. I read the first of them, *Confusion*, when it appeared in 1924, and I can remember only how impressed I was because the author was three years behind me in college. I have recently read *Michael Scarlett* (1925), an involved and mannered novel of Elizabethan England. I have not read *Cockpit* (1928), but I have found that it was reasonably well reviewed. In short, all three novels were probably a long way beyond what one would expect from so young a writer.

The last of the apprentice novels, and the first of the books that Cozzens recognizes today, was *Son of Perdition*, published in 1929. Two years later he published *S.S. San Pedro*, which was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection. This novellette, obviously suggested by the sinking of the "Vestris" on November 12, 1928, with a loss of 110 lives, displayed the kind of authority that has become Cozzens' most frequently mentioned characteristic. As many reviewers observed, including some who were maritime experts, it was hard to believe that the author of *S.S. San Pedro* had not been a sailor. Almost as impressive—and just as

characteristic of later work—was the novel's objectivity. Cozzens simply presented the picture, without offering a comment or even hinting at an attitude. If, as a result, the reader felt quite detached from the calamity that was being described, he had a powerful sense of its reality.

In the next decade Cozzens published five novels, three of which were uncommonly well received by the critics. The two comparative failures were *Castaway* (1934) and *Ask Me Tomorrow* (1940). The former, which I have not read, deals with the survivor of a disaster that has wiped out the population of New York City, and most of the reviewers thought it was overloaded with philosophical reflections. The latter is interesting because it is the only book Cozzens has written since *Confusion* that can be considered in any sense autobiographical. Clifton Fadiman liked it very well, calling it "civilized satire," but the majority of critics found it thin and unappealing. The story of a young American in Europe, an arrogant and unhappy young American, it is deftly written, but it hasn't much substance.

The other three novels constitute the body of work by which Cozzens was chiefly known before the appearance of *Guard of Honor*. The hero of *The Last Adam* (1933) is a country doctor in Connecticut. *Men and Brethren* (1936) portrays an Episcopal minister in New York City. *The Just and the Unjust* (1942) is concerned with a murder trial in a small town, presumably in New Jersey, and the central figure is a young lawyer.

Because his heroes were a doctor, a clergyman, and a lawyer, and because in each novel he gave the impression of knowing exactly what he was talking about, it became easy to think of him as a novelist of the professions. This was,

however, a misleading conception. *The Last Adam* is not "about" medicine in the sense that *Arrowsmith* is, nor can *Men and Brethren* be classified with *Elmer Gantry* as a novel about the clergy. Cozzens has never started out, as Sinclair Lewis avowedly did, to deal with a profession. George Bull is a doctor, and therefore *The Last Adam* contains a certain amount of medical detail, but it is about George Bull. *The Just and the Unjust* is saturated with legal terminology and the small talk of law offices and court corridors, but it remains a novel about human beings, some of whom happen to be lawyers.

In a famous essay, "The Novel Démeublé," Willa Cather wrote:

There is a popular superstition that "realism" asserts itself in the cataloguing of a great number of material objects, in explaining mechanical processes, the methods of operating manufactories and trades, and in minutely and unsparingly describing physical sensations. But is not realism, more than it is anything else, an attitude of mind on the part of the writer toward his material, a vague indication of the sympathy and candor with which he accepts, rather than chooses, his theme? Is the story of a banker who is unfaithful to his wife and who ruins himself by speculation in trying to gratify the caprices of his mistresses at all reinforced by a masterly exposition of banking, our whole system of credits, the methods of the Stock Exchange?

The quotation helps us to sharpen our sense of what it is that Cozzens has been trying to do. Miss Cather, one gathers, was thinking of Dreiser, and particularly of the masses of detail that he introduced in *The Financier* and *The Titan*. For Dreiser, the only way to present Frank Cowperwood was to tell as much as possible about the business transactions in which he was engaged. The method, often tedious enough in Dreiser, deserves all Miss Cather's strictures when practiced by novelists of less insight.

But Miss Cather objected to something more than the abuses of a method. In the paragraph from which I have quoted, she goes on to ask, "Are the banking system and the Stock Exchange worth being written about at all? Have such things any proper place in imaginative art?" But why not? What aesthetic canon rules that bankers and stock brokers are less worthy subjects of fiction than farmers, professors, apothecaries, and archbishops? And if a banker is to be written about, then his bank can no more be ignored than the apothecary's shop or the professor's classroom.

The truth is, of course, that Miss Cather's principles of selection were not, as she liked to assume, purely aesthetic, but were based in large measure on prejudices that had no intrinsic connection with her art. In trying to exclude the merely journalistic, she drew the line a considerable distance from where it belongs. She was quite right in believing that it is not the function of the novel to convey information about banking systems, the customs of foreign countries, or the profitable conduct of grocery stores. Although novels written to convey such information may be gratefully received, they are forgotten as soon as their facts are out of date. But Miss Cather was wrong in asserting that there are "things" that have no place in imaginative art. "Things" are not separable from human beings, and it is the most dangerous of heresies to suggest that anything human is alien to art.

All this Mr. Cozzens has always known. Believing that ignorance is not a novelist's privilege, he scorns inaccuracy and the vagueness of the lazy writer. If his hero is a lawyer, he learns what he needs to know about the law. But he has never conceived it to be his duty to instruct the reader on legal, med-

ical, ecclesiastical, or military matters. Because the moral issue that is central in *The Just and the Unjust* presents itself to Abner Coates in a series of situations that are inextricably involved with his professional activities, Cozzens has made a tremendous effort to portray those activities with absolute accuracy, but anyone who thinks this is a novel "about" a trial is missing the point.

Among the sensible remarks that Mr. De Voto made in his tribute to *Guard of Honor* was a protest against the classifying of the book as a war novel. "The term makes little sense," he pointed out, "as who should say a Methodist Episcopal Church South novel." "Novels are about people," he went on, "and war is a set of circumstances that affect people." *Guard of Honor* presents, with something that seems to verge on omniscience, the circumstances that affect the men and women about whom Cozzens is writing. In reading it, one learns a great deal about the operation of an army airfield, but only what is necessary to the understanding of the people. His principles of selection are quite different from Miss Cather's, but they operate just as rigorously.

As almost everyone has noticed, Cozzens has a remarkable talent for keeping himself out of his novels. He has never been a sailor, a doctor, a minister, or a lawyer. He has been an officer in the Army Air Force, but I defy anyone to discover him in *Guard of Honor*. Compared with such purely autobiographical writers as Wolfe and Farrell, or even with Hemingway, even with Faulkner, he seems not so much elusive as invisible. He has nothing less than a passion for detachment.

This passionate detachment of his is closely associated with his great technical skill. I do not mean that he has acquired that skill merely by virtue of be-

ing detached, for obviously he has worked hard for it, but the basis on which his craftsmanship has developed is his objectivity. Deliberately standing apart from his material, he strives to see clearly and to render with perfect accuracy what he sees. His writing is always careful, and never more careful than in the avoidance of pretentiousness. If his imagery is less strikingly original than that of some other writers, it is never fuzzy. He has a fine ear for many varieties of speech, and his dialogue achieves verisimilitude without banality.

It is a pleasure to analyze the structure of his work. Almost invariably, the action of one of his novels takes place in a brief period of time—in a few weeks, a few days, or even, as in *Men and Brethren*, in less than twenty-four hours. But, unlike most novelists who choose this kind of concentration, he makes little use of the flashback: what the reader needs to be told about the past emerges naturally in the process of narration. Naturalness, indeed, is what he always strives for, avoiding all devices that might get between the reader and the story. His stories seem to tell themselves, and that is the measure of his art.

The appearance of narrative simplicity is all the more remarkable because Cozzens has a liking for complex situations. *Guard of Honor* is the most complicated of all his novels, and the skill with which he sustains its multiple themes can scarcely be overestimated. We meet most of the principal characters of the book as they are flying back to an Army Air Force base in Florida, called Ocanara Field. The precision with which Cozzens describes the flight is what we have learned to expect from him; everything he says about the plane seems to be, and almost certainly is, exactly right. But the plane is important only because

of the passengers it carries, and what matters is the way the people reveal themselves. General Beal, Colonel Ross, Lieutenant Colonel Carricker, Captain Hicks, Lieutenant Turck (WAC), and Master Sergeant Pellerino—these are some of the persons we are to follow through the book, and we know them reasonably well by the time they land at Ocanara. Events connected with their landing precipitate the first of the crises that dominate the three days with which the book is occupied. They and other characters play their parts in these crises, and we see something of the way human minds operate under pressure. Moving with apparent ease through the tangled incidents of his three critical days, Cozzens carries the reader through to a firm and appropriate climax. Although it is a relatively long novel, one finishes it with amazement that so much has been done in its pages.

Most critics admired the virtuosity of *Guard of Honor*, but several wondered what the book was supposed to prove. The question, it seems to me, is not unanswerable, but it is true that Cozzens, in this book and in all his others, compels the reader to find the answer for himself. He not only refuses to editorialize; he deliberately keeps his feelings as well as his opinions out of his novels.

Yet of course no novelist can write eleven books without telling us something about himself. What Cozzens' novels reveal, first of all, is that he stands completely outside the tradition of revolt that has pretty well dominated American fiction for forty years. I have said that he doesn't write about the medical profession or the ministry or the law; what can be said even more emphatically is that he doesn't, in the manner of Sinclair Lewis, write against them. *Men and Brethren* is the only contemporary novel

I can think of that portrays a minister both sympathetically and unsentimentally, and *The Just and the Unjust* does very well by most of its lawyers. It must be granted that Cozzens doesn't set out to defend the professions; he simply accepts them as materials for fiction and as facts of life; but his natural bent is to try to discover what can be said for them.

It is instructive to observe the kind of person he chooses to write about. Ernest Cudlipp, his minister, is no more a saint than he is an Elmer Gantry. With a few human failings and no superhuman virtues, he follows the middle of the road, doing as much good and as little harm as he can. Abner Coates, the hero of *The Just and the Unjust*, is a competent young lawyer, not excessively brilliant, a little phlegmatic, as his father says. (Probably no love affair in contemporary fiction is conducted at a lower temperature than the romance between Abner and Bonnie.) He has his moment of revolt, directed against the political boss of the county, but he comes to see that bosses serve a function and that this particular boss does his job rather well. The character in *Guard of Honor* whom Cozzens most admires is obviously the calm, levelheaded, reflective Colonel Ross, in whom common sense achieves the stature of wisdom.

In *Twentieth Century Authors* Cozzens says:

My social preference is to be left alone, and people have always seemed willing, even eager, to gratify my inclination. I am more or less illiberal, and strongly antipathetic to all political and artistic movements. I was brought up an Episcopalian, and where I live the landed gentry are Republican.

He is a conservative, then, but I wonder whether he is as phlegmatic a conservative as Abner Coates or as philosophical a one as Colonel Ross. The

young man in *Ask Me Tomorrow* who may be an autobiographical character doesn't in the least resemble Abner; far from being phlegmatic and sensible, he is high-strung, violent in his opinions, and, as I have said, rather arrogant. If Cozzens is like him, his conservatism must be of the belligerent, not the resigned, variety. And it is true that when Cozzens does allow personal feeling to creep into his books, it is almost always directed against anti-conservatives. The radical in *Guard of Honor*, for example, Lieutenant Edsell, is made to seem not merely fatuous but thoroughly contemptible, and Cozzens writes about him with a bitterness that is rare in his work.

I don't see how one can quarrel with Cozzens' conservatism on literary grounds; on the contrary, I think American literature needs intelligent Tories, if only because the liberal-radical tradition has grown confused and shows signs of sterility. What I do wish is that he had given fuller expression to his Toryism. Most of his heroes, as I have pointed out, have learned or do learn to accept things as they are, but there is one rip-snorting exception—Dr. Bull in *The Last Adam*. Bull defies convention, damns the public, and wins his victory by sheer force of character. His vitality is the theme of the book—"a good greedy vitality," as his mistress reflects, "surely the very vitality of the world and the flesh." And Cozzens, displaying not merely insight into the character but also a strong sympathy, makes that vitality real. His other heroes are more admirable than Bull, but considerably less exciting.

In his *New Yorker* review of *Guard of Honor*, Brendan Gill spoke of "the sense one gets of an absence of deep feeling in Cozzens' novels, of a fastidious shying-off on the part of the novelist, of an inconspicuous but nagging failure to com-

mit himself beyond irony." "It is a fault," he went on, "all the more deplorable because one keeps running across hints that the deep feeling could perfectly well have been there but has been rigorously censored."

If I understand Mr. Gill, he does not want Cozzens to come out in favor of this cause or that or to muddy up his pages with a lot of extraneous emotionalism. What I think he believes—what I believe at any rate—is that Mr. Cozzens not only eliminates irrelevant ideas and emotions but frequently strains out some part of the vitality that is the essence of imaginative literature. Either he imposes too severe a discipline upon himself, or else, as seems to me more likely, there is in him some deep-seated reticence that is related as cause rather than effect to his principles of selection.

Certainly something is missing, and consequently it is difficult—for anyone but Bernard De Voto—to think of Cozzens as comparable to Faulkner or to Hemingway. But that scarcely means that he should be neglected. I am afraid that De Voto is right in saying that the critics would have done better by Cozzens if they could have classified him or used him to illustrate a trend. Whatever his limitations, he is not merely a better craftsman but a far more perceptive person than many of the novelists who are written about in high-brow quarterlies and scholarly books. Reviewing *Men and Brethren* in the *Nation*, Louis Kronenberger said that it was not an important novel, but added that Cozzens was "not only a livelier but a better writer than those whose talents are forever out of breath trying to keep up with their pretensions." The pretentious writers have had more than their share of attention, and it can do no harm to examine the talents of a man like Cozzens.

Perhaps, since he is not going to pay any attention to us anyway, we may as well concede Cozzens' right to do things his own way. One thing is clear: he has kept on growing; and there are not many novelists over forty of whom one can say that. He has not merely improved as a craftsman; his understanding of the hu-

man condition has ripened, and his perception of moral issues has matured. *Guard of Honor* is not only his most ambitious novel; it is his best one. It leaves the reader, moreover, with reason to believe that if Cozzens has now reached the peak of his powers, he can stay on that peak for a long time to come.

Aldous Huxley as a Borrower

R. C. BALD¹

AT THE beginning of *Left Hand Right Hand*, the first volume of his autobiography, Sir Osbert Sitwell introduces some reflections on the significance of heredity for the creative artist. "It is important," he maintains,

for the creator to have sources of energy that have not been tapped, to come of blood, at any rate in part, that has not been obliged to endure too great a strain upon it; an artist—not a cultivated lover of the arts—flowers best when the blood flows most freely in the veins, from stock that has not, intellectually, been overworked.

Then, by way of elucidation, follows this sentence:

To generalize, governesses are the friends of culture, but the foes of the artist; and, to particularize, were Mrs. Humphry Ward my aunt, as she is my friend Mr. Aldous Huxley's, and Matthew Arnold my great-uncle, and Thomas Huxley my grandfather, I should find the joys of artistic creation attenuated and not easy to capture; but I should be more cultivated.

One does not need to assent to Sir Osbert's theorizing to perceive that the very left-handed compliment to Aldous Huxley masks an astute piece of criticism. No definition of the cultivated man is attempted, but it will probably not be far wrong to regard him as one marked by an eclectic and critical awareness—

awareness not only of the arts, and of the arts in particular, but of science and philosophy as well. Such an awareness makes difficult the creative concentration of the artist because it dissipates his energies and comes between him and the object of his creation. This is the reason for Sir Osbert Sitwell's sharp distinction between culture and creation.

To what extent the blood streams which flowed through Matthew Arnold and Mrs. Humphry Ward and T. H. Huxley are wholly responsible for Aldous Huxley is at best matter for amusing speculation. Their influence, however, must have helped to create the family environment in which he grew up, and one can at least see in his description of himself as "by nature a natural historian" of human society the influence of his scientific grandfather. Furthermore, there is no doubt that Huxley, to a degree unusual even among modern writers, "sees life through the spectacles of books," so much so that he constantly reveals his awareness of the way in which this situation or that technical problem has been handled by some other writer. But that is not all; constantly at the back of his mind are the very words and rhythms in which his predecessors have expressed

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the feelings which he is trying to express. This is why Huxley never succeeded in becoming a poet. He has published no verse since *The Cicadas* (1931), and that volume contains so many imitations of Eliot as to read like a collection of parodies.

Huxley's too acute literary awareness, with its consequent attenuation of creative power, betrays itself in all sorts of ways. A symptom, comparatively slight but highly significant, is the fact that on occasion Huxley can become so caught in the toils of an effective phrase that he is not above borrowing from himself. The early poem *Frascati's* concludes:

when the wearied Band
Swoons to a waltz, I take her hand,
And there we sit in blissful calm
Quietly sweating palm to palm.

And in the story *Cynthia* there is a conversation in which one of the characters tells of the beginning of a love affair with a girl who had happened to be sitting next to him at the theater:

"... In the course of the act, entirely accidentally, I knocked my programme on to the floor, and reaching down to get it I touched her hand. Well, there was obviously nothing to do but to take hold of it."

"And what did she do?"

"Nothing. We sat like that the whole of the rest of the act, rapturously happy and—"

"And quietly perspiring palm to palm. I know exactly, so we can pass over that. Proceed."

Here the author seems to have felt that so neat a phrase was wasted on the comparatively small audience that would read the poem and so incorporated it into the story to secure for it a wider circulation. Real creative fecundity never needs to descend to such shifts.

Each reader, according to the degree in which he approximates Huxley's standard of "cultivation," will be able to make his own list of the more striking in-

debtitudes in the novels. Here are some of them. Huxley was deeply influenced by the appearance early in the twenties of *Ulysses* and *Les Faux-monnaires*, and these two works have affected the structure of all his subsequent novels. The influence of Gide is strongest in *Point Counter Point* and in *Eyeless in Gaza*; that of Joyce is most obvious in *Time Must Have a Stop* (which is Huxley's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*) and in the third chapter of *Brave New World*. Again, characters and episodes with literary origins are not uncommon. The early story *The Farcical History of Richard Greenow* was suggested by the literary dualism of William Sharp; Lypiatt, the painter in *Antic Hay*, is really a study of the character of the artist Benjamin Robert Haydon, for whose *Autobiography* Huxley later wrote an introduction. Gumbrell senior's plan for a harmonious and symmetrical London is, of course, based on Sir Christopher Wren's, and in *Crome Yellow* Sir Ferdinand Lapith, builder of Crome, pioneer of sanitation, and author of *Certaine Priuy Counsels by One of Her Maiesties Most Honorable Priuy Counsel* (1573) is obviously Sir John Harrington. In descriptive passages and in briefer episodes one can also catch literary echoes. In *Point Counter Point*, for instance, the description of the performance of Bach's *Suite in B Minor* at Lady Edward Tantamount's reception recalls Browning's *Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha*, and, in a lesser degree, Forster's description of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* in *Howard's End*, while Walter Bidlake's application to Burlap for a higher salary is a variation on the Spenlow and Jorkins episodes in *David Copperfield*. Even words and phrases, too, have their origins in the writings of others. For example, the term "pneumatic," used so frequently to de-

scribe the physical characteristics of the doxies in *Brave New World*, is taken, of course, from Eliot's *Whispers of Immortality*:

Grishkin is nice: her Russian eye
Is underlined for emphasis;
Uncorseted, her friendly bust
Gives promise of pneumatic bliss.

Indebtedness such as has just been catalogued can scarcely be classed as literary allusion, although that too is uncommonly frequent in Huxley's novels. It is true that Gumbrell senior introduces Wren's name into the discussion of his model, that there is a discreet reference to Fiona McCleod in *The Farcical History of Richard Greenow*, and that such references may not unfairly be compared to the footnotes in which a scholar cites his authorities. But there are no similar references to Haydon and Harrington in *Antic Hay* and *Crome Yellow*, and one can easily believe that many a reader has given Huxley full credit for having invented the characters of Lypiatt and Sir Ferdinando Lapith. Not everyone is familiar with the life and character of Haydon, while acquaintance with Harrington's *Metamorphosis of Ajax* from the very nature of its subject demands a mild, if perverse, sort of erudition.

The problem of Huxley's attitude to his borrowings comes up most sharply when one considers individual phrases and sentences. A significant example occurs in the antepenultimate paragraph of *Point Counter Point*:

The afternoon was fine. Burlap walked home. He was feeling pleased with himself and the world at large. "I accept the Universe," was how, only an hour before, he had concluded his next week's leader. "I accept the Universe." He had every reason for accepting it.

There is no question that the reader who knows the anecdote about Carlyle and Margaret Fuller will find this passage

more richly amusing than the one who does not. Accordingly, one might be perfectly justified in citing this passage not as an example of borrowing but merely of literary allusion. Yet it is not in the least necessary to have heard about Carlyle's explosive guffaw and his chuckling "Gad, she'd better!" to get from Huxley's passage all of what might be called its essential meaning. The fact is, Huxley has used the freedom of an Elizabethan dramatist in appropriating whatever suited his purpose.

As for "pneumatic" in *Brave New World*, it is perhaps better to be ignorant of its source. There was, indeed, a real danger shortly after the book was published that the term would pass into popular currency, and, had that happened, the credit—or blame—would have been entirely Huxley's. Yet, if he had intended a mere literary allusion, he was in a position where he could, with perfect justice, have disclaimed all responsibility for the actions of half-educated readers, who cannot even recognize a literary allusion when it is set before them. But, after all, the important thing for critic and author alike is not how often a writer borrows, or whether he expects his readers to recognize his sources, but what he does with his borrowings.

One of Huxley's involuntary collaborators has stated, with a satisfying finality, a set of criteria applicable to literary borrowings:

One of the surest tests is the way in which a poet borrows. Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn; the bad poet throws it into something which has no cohesion. A good poet will usually borrow from authors remote in time, or alien in language, or diverse in interest.

This statement of Eliot's, so illuminating with regard to his own practice, helps to explain why Huxley realized that it was no use to go on and try to be a poet. But the defect of creative capacity his poems reveal is not quite so fatal to a novelist. Obviously it prevents him from reaching the highest ranks, but it can leave unimpaired his capacity for wit and satire. Yet to compensate for his lack of real creativeness, Huxley has been forced to use various shifts. Not only does he frequently introduce into his novels easily recognizable caricatures of his contemporaries, but, as has been seen, when the creative impulse flags, he seizes upon the invention of other writers. It is, in fact, one sign of Huxley's essential second-rateness as an artist that, for all his sharpness and "cultivation," he should fail almost completely to meet the tests suggested by Eliot. It is his misfortune to have a positive talent for "defacing what he takes," and, if he succeeds in making it into "something different," it is into something shoddier, more vulgar, than the original.

Even in matters of technique is this so. The structure of *Eyeless in Gaza*, for instance, lacks justification; there is no inner necessity why the events should be narrated in the particular order chosen, and in that alone; they might just as well have been narrated in the conventional temporal and consecutive order. Joyce's still more significant experiments in the management of time and contemporaneity fare even worse in Huxley's hands; in chapter iii of *Brave New World* they are reduced to the level of a showman's trick.

It would be instructive to undertake a detailed comparison between the first chapter of *Time Must Have a Stop* and the section of chapter v of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which de-

scribes the composition of Stephen Daedalus' poem; but it must suffice here to illustrate Huxley's failures in handling borrowed material from two of the briefer episodes in *Point Counter Point*. There it will be found that he weakens his originals by his inability to concentrate. The setting of *Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha* is skilfully and briefly suggested at the beginning and end of the poem; for the rest, Browning's ill-paid and choleric organist grapples with the intricacies of a Bach fugue in such a way that every detail of his environment on which his mind seizes becomes relevant to his problem. Huxley's mind, on the other hand, likes to dwell on the irrelevant. In his description of the concert he does not even seem to want to separate the music from the conductor's "swan-like undulations from the loins," and he finds it amusing to record that the sounds which seem so significant are merely "vibrations in a cylindrical air column" blending with the noises produced as "the fiddlers draw resined horse-hair across the stretched intestines of lambs." There is no attempt to relate these impressions to any of the characters or their thoughts; it is Huxley's own mind which is too aware of too many things.

The episode in which Walter Bidlake asks to have his salary raised is longer than the account of David Copperfield's first interview with Mr. Spenlow, but detailed comparison of the two leaves the impression that Huxley is unnecessarily diffuse:

"The premium, stamp included, is a thousand pounds," said Mr. Spenlow. "As I have mentioned to Miss Trotwood, I am actuated by no mercenary considerations—few men less so, I believe—but Mr. Jorkins has his opinions on these subjects, and I am bound to respect Mr. Jorkins's opinions. Mr. Jorkins thinks a thousand pounds too little, in short."

Compare this with Huxley:

"I wish for your sake," Burlap continued, "for mine too," he added, putting himself with a rueful little laugh in the same financial boat with Walter, "that the paper did make more money. If you wrote worse, it might." The compliment was graceful. Burlap emphasized it with another friendly pat and smile. But the eyes expressed nothing. Meeting them for an instant, Walter had the strange impression that they were not looking at him at all, that they were not looking at anything. "The paper's too good. It's largely your fault. One cannot serve God and mammon."

Dickens needs neither a gesture nor a reference to the feelings of Mr. Spenlow's auditors; Mr. Spenlow's idiom and intonation are so characteristic that further comment is unnecessary. Even when due allowance is made for the difference of period and method, it is noteworthy that Huxley cannot rely on Burlap's rather colorless words; his comment and analysis are essential to the scene. Here is Dickens again:

If a clerk wanted his salary raised, Mr. Jorkins wouldn't listen to such a proposition. If a client were slow to settle his bill of costs, Mr. Jorkins was resolved to have it paid; and however painful these things might be (and always were) to Mr. Spenlow, Mr. Jorkins would have his bond. The heart and hand of the good angel Spenlow would have been always open, but for the restraining demon Jorkins.

And here is Huxley:

"I'll go and talk to Mr. Chivers," said Burlap. Mr. Chivers was the business manager. Burlap made use of him, as the Roman statesman made use of oracles and augurs, to promote his own policy. His unpopular decisions could always be attributed to Mr. Chivers; and when he made a popular one, it was invariably in the teeth of the business manager's soulless tyranny. Mr. Chi-

vers was a most convenient fiction. "I'll go this morning."

Huxley's sense of style gives neatness and point to his writing, and the apt classical allusion comes naturally from him; but the passage is pale beside the fecundity of Dickens' invention.

Huxley is at his worst, however, when he sniggers over Sir John Harrington or turns Eliot's sardonic wit into a piece of salacious slang. One recalls that he once wrote: "The fact that many people should be shocked by what he writes practically imposes it as a duty upon the writer to go on shocking them." There is something of the adolescent in the Huxley of the novels; it is as though he had never completely grown up. What one resents in the transmutation of his literary material is the tarnishing it undergoes at his hands, and in that resentment one thinks of a passage—a passage much to Huxley's taste—in Virgil. He is like one of those harpies who afflicted Aeneas and his companions in their wanderings:

at subitae horrifico lapsu de montibus adsunt
Harpyiae et magnis quatint clangoribus alas,
diripiuntque dapes contactaque omnia foedant
immundo; tum vox taetrum dira inter odorem.

Yet this is too strong; it is better to recover one's sense of proportion and be grateful for the pleasure and entertainment Huxley's novels have given—so long as one does not take him too seriously as a novelist. And it is evidence of a real measure of artistic integrity that of recent years Huxley has been turning more and more from pure fiction to other forms in an effort to find the means of expression best suited to his needs.

The Two Providences: Thematic Form in "Huckleberry Finn"

EDGAR M. BRANCH¹

I

MY SUBJECT is thematic form in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the coherence produced by the projection of theme through content and style.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is Huck's story of his struggle to win freedom for himself and Jim. The theme of the novel is implicit in an early situation that contrasts the conceptions of heavenly providence held by Miss Watson and the Widow Douglas. Each conception offers Huck a standard for right conduct: Miss Watson's to behave and conform in selfish safety, for fear of "the bad place"; the Widow's to give unselfish aid to others. The two alternatives are self-centered, conventional morality and humanitarian idealism. To Huck each alternative has drawbacks, but he quickly realizes that Miss Watson's conventional views can trap him. Besides, his intuitive feeling for any individual's worth and right to self-determination develops into the aid he gives to Jim. Thus the theme becomes the conflict between individual freedom and the restraints imposed by convention and force; or, within Huck's consciousness, the struggle between his intuitive morality and his conventional conscience.

Huck is puzzled by the differences between the two providences, but he finally concludes that "a poor chap would stand considerable show with the widow's

Providence, but if Miss Watson's got him there warn't no help for him any more. I thought it all out, and reckoned I would belong to the widow's [Providence]. . ." From this point on, the main action may be interpreted as Huck's faltering progress toward the Widow's providence, an action that deepens in significance once Huck's fortunes are joined with Jim's.

The theme is more fully defined by later incidents occurring on the river. When Huck saves Jim from the two Negro-hunters, he realizes that his feeling for the humane way to act does not accord with "right" conduct, but he blames his feelings, not the code, for the discrepancy. He can submit neither to his conventional conscience nor to his personal feelings, and he decides to let expediency determine future action. But unforeseen circumstance upsets expediency. The betrayal of Jim by the King and the Duke leads Huck to his classic decision: "All right, then, I'll go to hell." Huck reasons that "the plain hand of Providence" has slapped him in the face. He knows he is a lost soul but determines to "go the whole hog" in wickedness. Thus, ironically, Huck commits himself to Miss Watson's "bad place" because of his intuitive sense of right, which agrees with the Widow's advice to help others. Irony appears on another level, for all Huck can think of as he tries to harden his heart against Jim is the way Jim would stand Huck's watch on the raft;

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the way Jim's face lit up whenever Huck returned to him; and the way Jim "would always call me honey, and pet me, . . . and how good he always was. . . ." It is Jim's goodness—as the Widow had defined goodness—that leads Huck to "badness" and Miss Watson's hell-fire.

Thus, briefly, the theme develops within Huck's consciousness, from its first, implicit presentation to its resolution through decision and action. It takes shape as a duality in Huck's ethical perceptions. The moral intuition finally triumphs over the conventional code, although Huck continues to judge himself guilty in terms of that code. Consequently, his aid to Jim, which in effect makes him a member of the Widow's providence, has an instinctive but not a theoretical base.

II

The relationship of Huck's ethical duality to Huck's natural, supernatural, and social environments illustrates the interpenetration of theme and content in the novel.

Huck and Jim face a hostile nature. Their raft journeys through a physical world of hovering doom. The heavy fog that separates them, the snags, the currents, and the floods—all occasion near-disaster. They know, moreover, that natural catastrophe often thwarts a self-determined destiny. The two-story frame house, which they ransack as the flood sweeps it away, is filled with the poignance of death and lost human purpose. Even Huck's judgment, vital to their success, is sometimes betrayed by the dim "stars and shadows." Man-made situations in which either Huck or Jim is held in bondage reinforce this motif of obdurate nature.

But the natural world is not always unfriendly. Huck's flight from "siviliza-

tion" presupposes natural conditions for happiness. Like Thoreau, Huck has an intuitive feeling for the health of the "wild," a feeling implied in Huck's remarks when, late at night, he and Tom view the Mississippi from a hilltop: ". . . we looked away down into the village and could see three or four lights twinkling, where there was sick folks, maybe; and the stars over us was sparkling ever so fine; and down by the village was the river, a whole mile broad, and awful still and grand." The friendly woods eventually fail as a hideout, but the flowing river offers greater security. Usually it breathes freedom and peace or, at dawn, "solid lonesomeness," an ideal place for sensuous bathing, "lazying," or drifting. Its symbolism encompasses that of the raft, a floating island of security, where Huck could feel "mighty free and easy and comfortable," for "there warn't no home like a raft. . . ."

Thus Huck's conflict is anchored in the duality of nature and dramatized through scenic analogues. Nature's terrors and beauties, her unpredictability and homey security, fashion an appropriate setting for his personal predicament and effort.

Huck's hopes and dreads also feed upon superstition, which is both a preventative and a consolation: an activity to forestall evil and an attitude to explain it. To both Huck and Jim the reality of the supernatural has less to do with Christian orthodoxy than with the portents, luck, and magic formulas of a spirit realm. Jim, a confirmed animist, is Huck's mentor in the slippery discipline of superstitious ritual. He lives constantly in the midst of a swirling drama dominated by malicious spirits, and he himself is a primitive dramatist of his own experience. He is habitually absorbed in fantasies shaped by his position in a so-

society that values slaves as mere commodities or objects of wrath. To Huck, also, the spirit world is a vast panorama upon which is enacted the drama of his personal conflict. For the fatalism inherent in luck, in the manipulation of events by spirits, may work out for good or bad. Yet, to Huck, it looks as if "all the signs was about bad luck," and Jim admits that good-luck signs are "mighty few." They know that the ruling powers would rather bedevil men than reassure them. Although good luck and exorcising ritual justify hope and personal effort, the main force of superstition in the novel is to keep alive a sense of the malevolence at the heart of things. In the supernatural realm the thematic conflict apparent in Huck's moral dilemma is re-created on a mythical, fatalistic level.

The far-reaching duality of Huck's ethical problem is dramatized even more sharply in the world of man and his society. Human actions are just as unpredictable as natural and supernatural events. Men may be cynical, heartless frauds or ignorant dupes blindly swayed by convention and irrational mass opinion, whether the occasion be a camp meeting, a performance of the Royal Nonesuch, or the fleecing of orphans. Lying, bravado, and "soul-butter and hogwash" get results where honesty fails. And as Huck notices, the "greenhorns" and "flat heads" are also the victims of their own unexamined prejudices. They give life to society's institutions, which are rooted in ancient tradition and maintained by the pressure of convention or violence. They are the "Arkansas lunkheads," the Negro hunters, the feudists, the lynchers. In terms of social respectability they may be as far apart as Miss Watson and Huck's Pap. But whether human beings are professional exploiters like the King and Duke with their faith

in "the boss dodge," or nice old women of "quality" who sell Negroes down the river, they live by adherence to rigid code. Most of them are "enough to make a body ashamed of the human race."

But human nature also gives promise of the redemption and moral probity that Huck achieved, but did not recognize, in his own life. Miss Watson is kindly intentioned, and even the "Arkansas lunkheads" of Bricksville feel pity, distorted as it is into the lyncher's hatred. The Grangerfords, those relentless feuders, are beautiful, pitiful people with a profound sense of human dignity. Their life is ennobled by the very formality and tradition that finds its tragic outcome in death by violence. But some people in Huck's world live consistently from the heart. These persons are guileless and trusting. They respect human life. Jim, of course, is foremost in selflessness and magnanimity. Mary Jane Wilks is also of the elect. Like Uncle Silas, she is one of the "nice" ones.

With such people Huck has intimate communion. He finds his true social home on the raft, or in Mary Jane's presence, or, to a lesser degree, on the Phelps' farm. Such homey environments are likely to be disorganized and haphazard. They are expressions of a warm human fellowship far removed from organized trickery, violent mob action, or adherence to harmful tradition. Fundamentally, the contrast is between spontaneous human feeling and the inhumanity of conventional or violent action—a re-embodiment of Huck's ethical problem.

Thus the novel's subject matter, episodic and sometimes improvised, is in the main thematically coherent: quickened and made whole by the governing idea. Conversely, the rich, full-bodied content provides the conditions for Huck's moral

struggle and victory: the triumph of free human development over inflexible restrictions in the natural, supernatural, and social worlds. Those worlds are the macrocosmic expansion of Huck's own dual nature; theme is vividly projected in and through content.

III

The duality we have noticed is implicit in the style of the novel. Because Huck's mind is the recording medium, the question of style concerns his sensibility and its relationship to his language and dominant characteristics. A telling clue is Huck's use of terms that subtilize the theme, distilling it into the texture of the individual phrase. Dozens of these terms form a pattern of meaning thematically significant. Some persons, for example, are classified as the "right kind," the "good people," or the "quality," in ironic contrast to Huck who, like some others, is a "hard lot," "low-down and ornery." Likewise, Huck's many references to nobility underscore conventional, authoritarian, or violent modes of life. To Huck most kings and nobles are tyrants and liars who, like those people he must outwit, "never give anybody a chance." His references to them provide a pseudo-historical framework, appropriately naïve, that extends the theme into the past and spotlights the hierarchy of the social order.

Huck's constant use of the word "style," referring to proper procedure, correct form, is also illuminating. Henry VIII's style, for example, was to chop off a head "just as indifferent as if he was ordering up eggs. . . ." The word often implies grandeur, elegance, or conspicuous display. Huck might—and often does—use the word to describe any activity performed according to the rules of the game, whether the game be Tom's

romantic make-believe, the Grangerfords' way of life, or the King and Duke's lethal deceptions. Style is possessed by those who act according to a consciously held code.

Huck admires style and scorns "greenhorns" and "flatheads," who lack style merely because of unintelligence. But deeper than this amoral admiration is his instinctive alignment with those who are incapable of style—the Jim's and Mary Jane's, who are too good and feel too deeply to deceive others. Huck's use of the term, reflecting his ambivalent attitude, lights up his psychology and helps define his dual relation to others.

Huck himself displays style and yet, in the pinch, abandons style to follow his moral sense. This combination is fitting, for the success of his moral effort requires style—skilful manipulation—and the theme calls for a central character that can mirror, in a mixed mode of idealism and animal cunning, the nature of an unfriendly world and a moral purpose sufficiently strong to subdue that world. Consequently, Huck's character and general perceptions are stylistically significant. They are the substance of the medium which, when successfully handled, is an asset to thematic unity.

To begin with, Huck is unusually sensitive. He likes to feel "free and easy and comfortable," but he knows that danger, always in the offing, must be smelled out in advance. Therefore, the qualities of objects and events, qualities to be enjoyed or feared, are important to him. He constantly tickets the individuality of sensation, moment, and place. This need to identify promotes a vivid, particularized rendering of his physical environment. At ease in nature, Huck delights in the "dim and spider-webby" trees or the "freckled places on the ground where the light sifted down

through the leaves." Here the need to identify is lyrical. But when a situation is menacing or its outcome unknown, the need to identify is magical. As he gropes his way in the pitch dark on board the "Sir Walter Scott," the details of what he touches are guideposts to his progress and reassurance to his fears; and the whiskey on the breath of the murderers is the last detail he requires to define his perilous position. Similarly, Huck's urgent need to escape from Pap's cabin prompts this objective, stabbing notation alive with apprehension:

I took the sack of corn meal and took it to where the canoe was hid, and shoved the vines and branches apart and put it in; then I done the same with the side of bacon; then the whisky jug; I took all the coffee and sugar there was, and all the ammunition; I took the wadding; I took the bucket and gourd. . . . I cleaned out the place. . . . I fetched out the gun, and now I was done.

This sounds like a Hemingway character talking, but it is merely a boy who has learned, the hard way, the importance of defining the specific object or act. Between his mind and the physical world there is free interpenetration. His sensibility is attuned to whatever is enjoyable or menacing, and sensuous delight and apprehension are the twinned overtones of his perceptions.

Huck also is able to size up human qualities quickly and surely. For example, his view of Pap, who is ominously waiting in Huck's room, carries convincing undertones of the horrible and inhuman. Beneath Pap's "long and tangled and greasy" hair his face was white, "not like another man's white, but a white to make a body sick, . . . a tree-toad white, a fish-belly white." Huck quickly sees that he must outwit and deceive Pap, and in this perception he meets the world on its own terms. But he is equally sensitive to the sudden ethical

realization that, with people like Mary Jane, the truth is not only safer but "better . . . than a lie." His spontaneous sympathy for all victims of human cruelty—even for the King and Duke in their final shame—transcends the world's justice of an eye for an eye.

Naïveté is a strong element in Huck's sensitive perceptions of nature and men. His relation to experience is often childishly direct. For example, late at night, after Huck has escaped from Pap, he steers his canoe into the middle of the river so that in passing St. Petersburg he will not be noticed by the people on the ferry landing. This experience is sharply particularized, and its import is closely bound up with the theme. Huck is pictured in a moment of deep satisfaction. He has asserted his independence and is appropriately shown on the river. What he sees—the "deep" moonlit sky—typifies the freedom of his new, natural home. What he hears—the villagers' inane remarks floating over the water—symbolizes the old life he is leaving, the mentality he is outwitting. And the style adequately brings out the submerged meaning, for at bottom the style is Huck's sense of his relation to the surrounding world. He is keenly aware of that world, but with no self-consciousness. He is innocently suspended between an idyllic nature and a stupid, stereotyped humanity. His ready absorption of each is freshly recorded. He *knows*, certainly, but reveals his knowledge in a way that makes clear he is not aware that he knows—in direct contrast to Tom Sawyer. The resulting objectivity speaks for itself.

Huck's ethical integrity, too, often explodes in the medium with the full force of naïveté. His genuine independence contrasts with Tom's respectability. Tom is the romantic, working within the

accepted social and moral framework; Huck is the moral realist and individualist who goes beyond it. Huck's independence means that he usually respects his own impressions and conclusions. This basic self-respect is implied in the very process of his thinking that affirms his own worthlessness in the matter of prayer. It is closely allied to a strong sense of decency, implied in his description of the filthy, littered interior of the floating house.

The conditioning past of St. Petersburg also heightens the impression of Huck's *naïveté*. A natural conservative in many respects, Huck "liked the old ways best." The Widow, Miss Watson, Tom, and Pap are wraiths of boyhood authority emerging into his consciousness in times of crisis or doubt. His naïve acceptance of their attitudes extends even to his imagery, for his mind is lovingly habituated to past experience and authority. By contrast, Pap is opposed to all order and authority. He is free of any internal checks. Pap's revolt from civilization is the morally pointless floundering of uninhibited ignorance and selfishness. The integrity of Huck's revolt is the more courageous because he is unconsciously and lovingly moored to the conventional past.

But Huck is also a knowing person who has "been there before." He often acts with prevision and hindsight. Alert and watchful, he reads faces and "studies" the possible implications of every event. He is an inveterate planner and, if necessary, a resourceful liar. Here the essential quality, so well revealed in the medium, is a reflective ability not gratuitous but born of threatening circumstance.

Huck, the knowing one, is therefore a pragmatist. He readily assimilates experience and is constantly testing theory.

He is quick to observe form in order to insure the substance of his desire. His respect for fact, often deepening into a cynical or fatalistic attitude, helps shape his philosophy. Although he maneuvers with style and reflects that "you can't be too careful," he knows that the evil "thing that's going to happen" comes with terrifying unexpectedness. He can see around the immediate experience, and he brings to it a philosophy and morality that sometimes universalize it.

Thus Huck's sensibility blends the naive and the knowing. His idiom of perception reveals the central conflict. Both an unwilling hero and a child of his world, Huck translates his experience into appropriate perceptive terms.

IV

This account of thematic unity needs qualification, for the ultimate perspective in the novel is not Huck's but the author's. Mark Twain's handling of his presiding role affects the dramatization.

Clearly, Mark Twain sometimes oversteps the emotional and linguistic limits of Huck's sensibility. At times Huck's *naïveté* and ingenuity are overplayed. Contrived adventure, transparent irony, and overriding humor cripple belief. The final action, Jim's rescue by the boys, is particularly arbitrary. This burlesque, anchored in Tom's imagination, is played out on the level of make-believe. Special conditions surrounding the rescue contradict the previous picture of tragically irrational life and stultify Huck's ethical conflict. The episode is an artificial maneuver to conclude the action; it is Mark Twain's payment for some earlier sins against the logic of plot. Yet, characteristically, even this episode is thematically significant. It is a light play upon the earlier serious treatment, carrying us back by means of thematic echoes and

transpositions of characters. Furthermore, the rescue of Jim comically substitutes formal and bogus values for the particular, immediate human good. It is the converse of the novel's governing image: Huck's serious struggle to follow the promptings of his heart despite internal and external checks.

Fortunately, Mark Twain usually kept backstage, thereby creating an additional dimension of meaning. Irony in the novel, for example, is a function of Huck's naive vision relative to the author's deeper understanding. The normal handling of humor and pathos likewise extends the emotional range beyond Huck's limited participation. Mark Twain assimilated most situations to Huck's central consciousness and yet transcended Huck's viewpoint. The limitations of the medium were turned to solid account.

Thus Huck's sensibility is both transcended and imperfectly recorded; yet the thematic form, which is the projection of that sensibility, remains a major source of poetic coherence in the novel.

V

The degree of thematic form achieved in *Huckleberry Finn* is a rare accomplishment in Mark Twain's writing. In this novel, perhaps, it grew out of the intimate relation of the dramatized theme to Mark Twain's theory of narrative form, to his creative process, and to emotional patterns of his personality.

Mark Twain's theory of narrative form was anarchical. A tale, he wrote, should tell itself. The telling should involve "no hesitations, no delays, no cogitations, no attempts at invention"; it should flow freely from the "tank" of inspiration. The author, a "faithful and interested amanuensis," should merely "hold the pen and let the story . . . say,

after its own fashion, what it desires to say."² Consequently, the proper law of narrative is "*no law*."³ The course of narrative is rightfully changed by every obstruction in its path. This theory describes the major movement in *Huckleberry Finn*. It indorses the lack of rational narrative organization in that novel, yet seems to condemn the artificial manipulation of plot made necessary by that lack of rationality. The theory may be regarded as a justification of the frontier humorist's habitual aimlessness and informality. But also it was a reflex of the creative process best suited to his mature genius: the symmetrical plot-form of *The Prince and the Pauper* added artificiality to an already thin novel, but the thematic form of *Huckleberry Finn* immeasurably enriched that novel despite narrative deficiencies. In denying the importance of formal narrative structure, the theory metaphorically upholds the value of organic form, exemplified in *Huckleberry Finn* by the far-flung dramatization of theme.

In line with the theory, the creative endeavor that went into this novel was notably nonrational. Conscious construction, of course, may be seen in Mark Twain's mastery of episode, in his manipulation of the closing action, and in his revisions. But the creative process first required an emotional grasp of his material. He drew deeply, instinctively, from personal sources—or, as he said, from "the pathetic past, the beautiful past, the dear and lamented past."⁴ Probably the euphoria experienced during composition was a sign of emotional attunement. "I'm boozing these days,"

² Mark Twain, *Mark Twain in Eruption*, ed. Bernard DeVoto (New York: Harper's, 1940), pp. 196, 197, 243.

³ Mark Twain, *Mark Twain's Autobiography*, ed. A. B. Paine (New York: Harper's, 1924), I, 237.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

he wrote to Howells when the novel was going well, "got health and spirits to waste. . . ." At last, after some false starts, the tale was telling itself. This emotional tie-in with the past found expression in Mark Twain's self-identification with Huck, the dominant formal strategy he employed. This identification breathed life into Huck's character and experience and brought into play the enriching limitations of Huck's viewpoint. Thus whatever is lyrical, humorous, or morally significant in the novel is, at its best, organic with the mind-stuff of Huck and not mechanically imposed. The achieved form was emotionally determined. The dramatization of theme, through Huck's vision and language, was the formal equivalent of Mark Twain's emotional creativity.

Finally, the theme of *Huckleberry Finn* is an intimate expression of Mark Twain's personality. In that novel he invoked emotional patterns that underlay lifelong responses, from his earliest sensuous pleasures in nature to his despairing

³ *Ibid.*, I, 434.

rationalizations of old age. Attitudes of guilt, dread, placation, and delight; the motive of self-survival and the drive for freedom—all were brought into delicate balance in Huck's character. Moreover, Mark Twain's morality, like Hucks', was intuitive. Rational superstructures came hard to each: the ideology was often inadequate to the feeling. But Mark Twain's feelings, like Hucks', were usually right, even when overlaid with convention or rationalized in theories having antidemocratic or inhumanitarian implications. A final appropriateness of the theme to Mark Twain's personality is suggested by Livy's pet name for him: Youth. Mark Twain's spontaneity of emotion, in both his personal relations and his literary method, was a youthful trait that remained unencumbered by the incrustations of age. And *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* commemorates the youth of mankind. For the essence of Huck is unspoiled impulse that outstrips conceptual knowledge to bring about the Widow's providence here on earth.

"Paradise Lost" and the Survey Course

IRENE SAMUEL¹

MAY a student of Milton, without attempting either to defend or to attack the survey course in English literature, offer a suggestion on the teaching of *Paradise Lost* in it? The course, as the one year of literature usually required of all students, has, besides evident disadvantages, certain neutral, but constant, effects. It determines the fate of writers in our departmental offerings, creates the

one impression of major literary works that most students ever get, and, more important still, gives such works their one chance of contributing in any degree to the student's essential education.

It is largely because *Paradise Lost* has something to contribute, even in a brief acquaintance, that its place in the survey course is warranted at all. Naturally, one hopes that a fair presentation will produce a fair impression of the poet and encourage further study of his work;

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but our chief concern is properly to allow the poem, in the little time available, a fair chance to produce its effect on the student. On none of these grounds can we justify what is usually done with *Paradise Lost*.

Texts designed for the survey course—and, unfortunately, most colleges use, perhaps have to use, such texts—generally offer Books I and II as representative of the poem. Satan then inevitably becomes the "hero"—without benefit of Blake or Shelley; the whole question of God's ways to man turns into an indictment of his ways to Satan, as Satan reports on them; Adam and Eve never appear; and Eden vanishes without being lost. In fact, Eden comes to resemble Moscow in *The Three Sisters*: it keeps cropping up in conversation, but no one ever gets there. Satan himself sticks at the edge of Chaos: the student, one may hazard, is left in it.

Beyond such major distortions of plot, meaning, and emphasis, along with all manner of consequent misinterpretation, the reading of Books I and II by themselves does *Paradise Lost* the minor disservice of limiting even its famous orchestral effects to those appropriate in the nether world. Few undergraduates could guess from the episodes in Hell and Chaos that Milton knew how to strike a mellow note or a tender one.

And if Books I and II, taken alone, misrepresent the poem thus completely, how little of the effect intended by Milton they can convey! *Paradise Lost* is, first of all, tragic, designed to arouse and relieve pity and fear, and, second, philosophical, designed to investigate the implications of man's lot. Whether Milton succeeds in producing a tragic catharsis or in persuading us that man inhabits a just universe is beside the point. He can hardly do either in the scenes in

Hell. To say that *Othello* is relatively weak as tragedy and as argument (an assumption that we trust no admirer of Shakespeare will grant) would hardly justify our offering the initial dialogue between Iago and Roderigo as representative of the play. Whatever effect *Paradise Lost* can have, it can have only if allowed to present its central episode and deal with its central theme, which is the loss of human happiness, not Satan's quarrel with the universe—what man loses, in what manner, with what consequences, and how it can be lost and yet leave justice intact at the heart of the world.

Every portion of the poem moves toward or from that center and is thus in some degree indicative of the whole, as every portion of any organic whole must be. An extinct species of animal can be reconstructed from the fossilized remains of one toe—by the expert; but who would therefore lop the toe from a live animal so that the novice in the laboratory might reconstruct the animal? Books I and II are but the left foot of *Paradise Lost*.

If we wish to begin with the structure, as doubtless we should, Milton himself gives the skeleton of his poem in the arguments prefixed to the several books. They can be read quickly and will give the right direction and emphasis to whatever part of the poem is studied. But then, in choosing the part to be studied, we ought surely to take what is most nearly representative of the whole. The title itself tells us where to look for that—to the losing of Paradise. If the student is to get *Paradise Lost* quickly, let him anatomize Book IX. Here are the main agents engaged in the main action in the main setting. The action is human and tragic, treats of "the ways of God to man," constitutes the center of the po-

em. And, because it contains the critical episode, it is the most interesting book of the twelve and most fully reveals the qualities that make *Paradise Lost* a great poem and Milton a great poet—considerations which ought surely to be important in a survey course. Even the anti-Miltonist may more properly seek the ground for his view of the poem at its center than at a lopped-off end.

A careful study of Book IX in the light of Milton's own summary of the whole will thus do more to give the student a just notion of *Paradise Lost* than will the reading of Books I and II with the usual anthologist's comments. It will also give the poem a chance to have its intended effect as tragedy and as philosophical discourse. Like every great poem, *Paradise Lost* makes its philosophical point, whether successfully or unsuccessfully, through its plot. Since the entire action turns on what happens in Book IX, the argument, too, stands or falls in that central episode. Thus the near-quarrel between Adam and Eve, revealing her restlessness and his compliance, makes clear the human springs of what follows. Then, as the serpent wins Eve to parrot his sophistries (and his sophistries are lessmistakable by the unprepared reader in Book IX than in Book I) and again as Adam, aware of Eve's delusion, nonetheless decides to share it, the whole process of self-deception is laid bare, producing the mingled pity and terror of tragedy, with that special irony that comes of our knowing what those involved are too self-blinded to see.

At the same time, the central issue comes clear: the thing forbidden was not knowledge but breach of trust. Whether or not the forbidding was justifiable may still be argued; but student and instructor ought at least to be arguing about what Milton had the God of *his* poem

forbid *his* Adam and Eve in *his* Eden. Possibly, the careful reader will see that the grounds of the forbidding are the simple inverse of the motives that prompt Eve and Adam to disobey: what happens in their minds as each first decides to eat the fruit, then eats it, and then proceeds to justify the eating—this constitutes the meaning of the prohibition. But all such meanings are for the reader of Book IX to discover from the dialogue and incidents.

In any case he will discover Milton's insight into human motives, the major triumph of the poem. He may not find the disobedience tragic or the God who allows it just; he will at least see by what means Milton tried to make the story of man's fall at once a tragedy and a justification of God's ways.

Such a careful reading of Book IX is probably worth more than a hasty reading of a considerably larger portion of the poem. In literary study, too, the half may be more than the whole. But if there is time, other passages can be worked in before or after that central book. The opening of Book I and the very end of the poem may be used to underscore the theme and direction of the whole; the description of Eden in Book IV and the account of Eve's dream in Book V to clarify what was lost and why; the council scenes in Books II and III to show how Satan and God are involved in the central action; the agony of the fallen pair in Book X to complete the tragic aftermath. But whatever is worked in, Book IX should be kept the focal point of interpretation. If the roll call in Book I fits less easily into such a plan, that may not be a serious loss to the student or do the greatest disservice to the poem.

To plunge thus into Book IX is doubtless not to follow the sequence of the plot as Milton worked it out, but surely dis-

torts its organization and meaning less than stopping at the start does. And from Book IX, even by itself, the student can most quickly gain what *Paradise Lost*, if it has merit at all, can give. He can learn that Milton's chief interest was in man; gauge his insight into human motive; see his variety in incident, character, tone; and still meet Satan, possibly with more understanding. Most important, the poem will have a chance of

speaking to him Milton's views on the sources of human happiness and misery and of producing in him the effect appropriate to a tragic narrative on the loss of Eden. To be sure, much of this may not happen, but the danger of failure hardly justifies teachers of the survey course in a prohibition much less explicable than that of Milton's God. He, at least, let Adam and Eve dwell for a time in Paradise before they lost it.

Observations on Scholarly Studies

BENNETT WEAVER¹

I. INTRODUCTION

ONE who has examined a corpus of scholarly studies, especially if those studies are spread over the past century, has probably made certain observations. The observations may have been specific or general. Those that were specific, pertaining as they did to some particular work, may not have had significance beyond that work. Those that were general, surveying tendencies and trends, may have had greater significance. And the fact that they may have taken the form of generalizations does not necessarily vitiate them; for some generalizations may be sound and useful. The fact that they are unweighted by illustration leaves them free more readily to carry those instances which each reader may wish to put upon them.

It is the purpose of this paper to present certain generalizations about scholarly studies. The older scholar will probably accept or reject them, even as they fit or do not fit into the crystallized patterns of his practice. The younger schol-

ar, who yet has to gain his doctorate or to enjoy the fresh fruits of it while still being aware of his humanity, may consider them perchance with resolution. Our interest is in the younger men.

II. THE GENERALIZATIONS

1. *Thesis cogency*.—Criticism gains in reasonableness and health when it deals with complete pieces of writing and when it avoids the gratification of the introspective. By understanding the organic unity of a novel, a play, or a poem, the student is greatly enabled to deal with it justly; and, by refusing to overlay the work with intimate suppositions, he fortifies the integrity of his judgment. Where these two things are not done, criticism tends to become so singular and indulgent as to lose validity.

Associated with the tendency not to deal objectively with the whole work of art is the tendency to "prove" a thesis. When, half a century ago, it was sufficient after the German manner to list parallels (a practice not yet neglected), there was no serious harm done. But, as more and more subjects were exploited

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and easily demonstrable propositions appeared to be all worked and done, thesis topics became smaller in scope and more highly specialized in purpose. As if to compensate for a certain lack of generous subject matter or for some peculiarity in the point of view of the scholar, thesis writers became more and more harassed by the necessity of "proving" their assumptions. Consequently, they grew cogent. The candidate for the doctorate, not yet a free man, was especially caught in the urgency of proving. The result often was not only that he proved some things that were not true but that he overproved what was true. Emphases bulged into overemphases. Propositions were lost in swellings. And what the candidate learned to do in his theses he sometimes continued to do in his articles and books. Although Melvin Rader and A. P. Stallknecht point out the importance of Wordsworth's mystical experience, Arthur Beatty proves that the poet was largely under the influence of Hartley. Another critic may point out that, in writing the *Intimations* ode, Wordsworth was not exploiting Plato directly but rather one who knew Plato, even though the theory of recollection announced by the Greek and repudiated by Lucretius was common knowledge among the educated men of the early nineteenth century. Perhaps the greatest student of Shelley in our time, urging with force that the poet created the Maniac in *Julian and Maddalo* as a self-study, has to be corrected somewhat by Carlos Baker, who urges with equal force that the Maniac was a study of Tasso. That astute and honored scholar, John Livingston Lowes, proves that Shelley, in writing *The Witch of Atlas*, drew upon John Keats. He substantiates his argument with thirty-two citations, not one of which, David L. Clark proves in

turn, can "confidently be said to come from Keats." The result of this tight, twisted cogency is that too much of our scholarship must be taken at a discount. Where there is no frank admission—in some cases it is made—that scholars are merely playing a cabalistic game with their fellow-scholars, rectification is difficult, and literary study is brought under the harrowing question: "What is the human worth of these cogently proved studies?"

2. *Biographical criticism.*—Over the century biographical data have at times been held antecedent to literary criticism or have been made conglomerate with that criticism. Letters especially have become a means for the examination of the secret mutinies of gifted men—letters often, as Sidney Tremayne says, which "should never have been written and ought immediately to have been destroyed." I have seen a group of scholars delighted by the presentation of a letter that Coleridge implored should be burned as soon as it was read. Our leading literary magazine gives first place to the letters of Byron addressed to Countess Guiccioli, in themselves what they are and so far, fortunately, left within themselves. The more strange, naughty, or fascinating the life of the author, the more interestingly and insistently the biographical matter is studied. Or the more baffling and intriguing the piece of literature under examination, the greater is the traffic with the facts of the author's life. Those studies which are nearest the man may be most confused as criticism; and those studies which are farthest from the man may die in the chill of time-space. Among the biographical critics there is often an insufficient human awareness of how the circumstances of a man's life may distil themselves into the verse or the sentence, if, indeed, they

may at all. They are sometimes insufficiently astounded by the processes of creativity, by the secret transmutations of the mind; and they stumble through the "Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of" to unfortunate conclusions. If, in close reasoning, the biographical critic is right, must he not know all of the biography before he can know all of the poem? Or, knowing nothing of the biography, how, then, can he know anything of the poem? If he should say that what is partly known somehow in part supports his criticism, let him not spread his conclusions beyond what supports them. On every side integrity holds him in. The Book of Job, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and much of Shakespeare must be closed to him. Nor is the fascinating nature of the historical fact necessarily referential to the scholar's critical duty. Until he can pick up an unsigned parchment out of the sand of the desert and stand and deliver himself on the literary worth or lack of worth of the writing on the parchment, he is an incomplete critic.

Especially in the field of poetry it might help us if we could be clear on one point: the poem is the eternal thing; the form in which it appears is only dress or costume. True, the dress or costume are important and may be suitable or not, but that is another matter. The sad waste of battle is an everlasting poem; and the Shi King dresses it in ancient Chinese symbols; the Bhagavad-Gita dresses it in Sanskrit; Homer dresses it in the Greek hexameter; Haskell dresses it in American prose. No man creates the truth out of his own life or makes the beauty out of some milieu. All he may do is gather the veils of artistry about the eternal poem. "When I am dead, beloved" and "Under the wide and starry sky" are not two poems, one written by a woman in England, the other by a man

at Vailima: they are two treatments of one eternal poem. Art is brief; life is forever. Were the biographical critic to keep these things in mind, he might write more significantly or not at all.

3. *Narcissan criticism*.—Far more dangerous to critical health than biographical criticism is Narcissan criticism. The trick of reading one's self into a piece of literature and then of finding there nothing else of importance is deadly indeed. But to do this very thing has often proved psychically satisfying. Even the wonderful Coleridge tends subtly to transmute Hamlet into himself and does not sympathize with the Dane less because of the strange paralysis of his own will. This fathering of one's own thoughts upon an author can beget a great and sturdy family of errors. When allegorical matters are involved, everything grows worse. If an author has offered interpretations, they are straightway forgotten; if he has not, the scholar ranges wide and free in the fields of meaning. His own intellectual inventiveness and vitality weaken his conclusions. The better man he is, the worse may be his judgments. If he is a simple man, his delight in asseveration is limited. If he is recondite, his assertions threaten the whole field of scholars. Newman Ivey White, observing the various interpretations of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, writes a neat piece of criticism under the caption: "Every Man His Own Allegorist." Although the poet himself, in nineteen separate references to the drama, never mentions allegory, surely more than nineteen critics have found in it their own peculiar meanings. The corrective would seem to be the remembering of Hervey's word: "The corpse, gentlemen, is the only authority," which, being translated, is: "The piece of literature, gentlemen, is the only authority."

4. *Mulling minutiae.*—In many of the studies written a century ago there was largeness. Even Francis Jeffrey's strictures upon Wordsworth bore evidence of large capacities. Although the purpose was perverted, there was scope to the writing. The convenience with which salient details were overlooked did not curb the sweep of the criticism. There were attempts at all-over judgments, sometimes failing in justice but not often failing through myopia. Later the "scientific" study of language came into vogue, and, as if through contagion, "scientific" methodologies were developed for the study of literature. For a time the inapplicability of these methodologies was not sufficiently questioned. Literary scholarship became divorced from art. And, as a result of its *mésalliance* with science, men and women began to count and to measure. The surd and the absurd became equally the satisfactions of research. Shards were gathered; no urn was formed. Parts became less than parts because they were brought into no pattern. The need grew for scholars who could deal with whole pieces of literature. Analysis had run us into the dust. The synthetic, the imaginative, the truly critical mind and the large task wholly done—there is our need.

5. *Milieu and muddle.*—As procrastination is the thief of time, so postponement is the thief of criticism. One of the most insidious forms of postponement is the study of the milieu of an author. If at last we are to arrive at a literary judgment of the worth of what is written, we may not believe that we have completed our task when we explore the milieu of an author or study the history of ideas in his period. These things are in themselves what they are, probably belonging more surely to social science and to philosophy than to literary study. Their danger

among scholars has become not that they may not properly belong to the business of literary criticism but that they are mistaken for literary criticism itself. Scholarship lags in them. It never comes up to its duty: the literary evaluation of what is written. Such was the milieu of such a poet? Well. We may not rest with that. What is the worth of that which he has written? What is his power of artistry? In our best and our right literary studies it is not the history of the idea which is given, and there an end; but what is given is its worth and its beauty after it has been transmuted in the creative mind and become a living part of the page. There is perhaps no surer way of suggesting that the scholar is at last a scholar because he is not really aware of the creative process than by letting a study rest in the history of ideas. "Poetry," says Bradley, "is the revelation of eternal ideas."

6. *Sources and influences.*—The older-fashioned setting-up of parallels has developed, in the last three decades, into a full-blown study of influences. And this kind of study is another form of postponement or actual avoiding of proper critical processes and conclusions. Any critical bibliography will furnish an excess of examples.

a) However subtly the scholar demonstrates that Y is influenced by X, he does not complete his task until he works out a critical evaluation of the X material as it appears in Y. So lost are some scholars in their quest for X material in Y that, having found it, they make no effort to determine whether it was worth finding or not or whether or not Y has made anything out of it worth noting. If, indeed, the scholar is unable to evaluate Y before he has traced the influence of X upon him, then, by the same token, he cannot evaluate X before he has, in turn,

traced the influences that played upon X, and so on ad infinitum until the whole blind process ends in inevitable nothing.

b) Or put the case that X and Z are similars and that Y knows them both. Then the nice question becomes: From which of these does Y draw? And, since one scholar has proved the influence of X upon Y, another scholar must prove the influence of Z upon Y. So they cancel each other in a private game of counters where there never was any coin.

c) Or put the case that Y knew X before he came upon similar ideas in Z. Unbelievable as it may seem, the playful scholar will yet "prove" that it was Z who influenced Y. Or when what Y uses from X is the same as what Z uses, then who has the button? This game is played in many combinations, but it can never be more than a game. As a matter of fact, since actually quoted passages may indicate less influence than subtly modulated passages, there is left to the player only the satisfaction of dexterity.

It is no more than natural to find in the minds of literary artists parts of what they have met in their reading. And it is interesting to see in what ways their minds have wrought with what they retain. If, however, the scholar rests merely among influences, he has performed no proper function. It is only when he arrives at a sympathetic comprehension of what has been wrought and when he has rendered a critical appraisal of it that he has met his peculiar responsibility. And if he achieves this appraisal, he achieves nothing that he might not have gained had he not been aware of the influence.

7. Fads and formalities.—(a) Strong scholarship fixes the ways of the weak, and the ways of the weak are continued long after all strength is gone out of them. There was a time when documen-

tation was insufficient. Assertions took the place of exact statements. Ascriptions were laxly made. Then the footnote was born. Proliferation did the rest. As the oats ate the horses, the footnote ate thesis and articles and whole double volumes. No scholar so hardy as to banish him; few scholars so brave as to restrain him; many scholars so pressed as to honor him. Ten footnotes to the page gave undeniable evidence of more weighty scholarship than five or—God help us!—none. And the footnote became a fad.

b) The first-paragraph fad, since the first paragraph was most bedecked with footnotes, developed simultaneously. No scholar could start out and say what he had to say clean and hard. He had to observe a formality: X has discovered this; Y has noted that; Z has taken such a position. But a point has been neglected, a fact has been overlooked. I present the fact for the new light that it will throw upon the subject. Almost any learned journal will furnish an example of this ritual. This clogging of scholars should cease if we are to approach our problems unbowed by the weight of old evidence. If we wish to run our researches in private, that is our own affair. But, if we are to deal with our material openly and in a hale manner, we should be released to go straight ahead. The new intelligence should be honored. Let it offer its golden increment: there has not been, there will not be, another like it.

c) The first-chapter fad follows. All that has previously been said must be scrutinized before the scholar may break away to his task. He must go down through all the runways and tunnels which his predecessors have laid and examine all their stores before he can do what, if he has any life in him, he will do anyhow. So each scholar is burdened by his fellow. The dead past may not bury

its dead, thus losing its proper function. But, we say, the new man must know what the old man has said, and he needs the discipline of the learning. Very well; provide seminars and sessions of forgiveness. When he comes to writing his thesis, free him if he be any good. After the thesis is done, the assumption of jejunity need not be made.

d) Along with these fads and formalities, because by their nature they lack life, goes the flat-style fad. Such style may often be suited to what is now done. Before "research" took its cruel hold upon the minds of scholars, there were, now and then, gusto and color and joy in literary studies. Granted, there were excesses; and taste was offended, judgment insulted. But the joy was there, and a good man wrote: "To miss the joy is to miss all." What has become of vibrancy in our scholarly studies? Where is the gusto? Who dares write in the manner of the great literature which he examines? The owls hoot him down. The flat style is now the fad.

III. CONCLUSION

Other observations crowd in: the uncertainty of autobiographical interpretations; the tendency to quote authorities rather than study original documents; the static fallacy of assuming that there is no growth in the mind of an author, which fallacy often results in charging him with holding ideas which he has outgrown and repudiated. Then there is

the tendency to pack an artist's life into neat, unhuman periods; the temptation to overinform or to underinform or to interpret passages according to the scholar's own temperament; the heavy confusion of history with poetry; and the anatomical fallacy which says: I do not know what it is, and I do not care what it is worth, but I shall show you how it is put together." The anatomical worker seems not to know that any true piece of art is made of more than the sum of its parts.

"What does it all mean?" If there is a vast ineffectuality which seems to hang over our modern literary studies, these observations we have been making may be to the point. When scholarly studies are no longer written in disdain of effectuality; when we eschew the secret science of scholarship for scholars; when we repudiate research for purposes of research alone, insisting on some sane ending to all our deep scrutiny; when we learn and write in order that men may have more of worth gladly to teach; when we subordinate means to ends; and when we agree that the great function of literary studies is truly like the great function of art itself—to humanize—then we shall have come closer to our right end. But perhaps as scholars in literature we shall not have gained our highest satisfaction or met our happiest responsibility until, with Professor Hunt of Princeton, we can say that through our studies the national life has been "quickened and elevated."

Oral Interpretation as Graduate Work in English

GEORGE F. REYNOLDS¹

I

A DESIRABLE change in the training of some graduate students in English would be to require advanced work on oral interpretation from all of them who expect to teach freshmen and sophomore literature. This would provide a different discipline from any they now receive, furnish them a useful tool for use in their teaching, and develop a field of study now much neglected.

This statement is quite likely to be greeted by disagreement if not, indeed, disdain. Few college teachers of English have had much training in oral interpretation, and it itself has a good deal to live down in the sins of the declaimers and impersonators and elocutionists of the past—it is significant how damning all these epithets have become—and the vagaries and vulgarities of some speech departments today. Oral interpretation is neglected also because it is the possible concern of two academic departments and so is the primary interest of neither. Speech departments have not usually considered it their business to insist that their students have a varied and thorough knowledge of literature. And English departments, so far as literature is concerned, have been more interested in criticism, literary history, and research. They have also been made suspicious of all speech activities by the emptiness and

pretentiousness of some speech department programs. In consequence, oral interpretation has been increasingly neglected, and training in it has too often been insufficient and ineffective. That it is neglected is shown conclusively by the fact that it not mentioned at all in Dr. Karl Holzknecht's detailed summary of the regulations governing advanced degrees in English at twenty-six leading American universities or in Wellek and Warren's comprehensive discussion of graduate study in literature, *Theory of Literature*.

It is not that interpretation is in itself uninteresting or unimportant. But the American educational program for the last fifty years has increasingly emphasized rapid silent reading from the grades up. Until this emphasis is changed, there is little hope of teaching the majority of students to read aloud effectively for themselves. We have therefore of necessity to look to what the teachers can do. Many teachers of English in secondary schools and colleges do read well, but unfortunately many do not. They can scarcely be expected to, because the training they have received has usually done little to prepare them for it.

II

Before consideration of what that training should be, two limitations must be noted. First, we are not concerned with the training of professional entertainers in the art of oral interpretation. That art demands special aptitudes and special disciplines, the ability to interest

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large general audiences, showmanship. The teacher need not meet these demands, and the techniques of the professional are unnecessary for him; in most, instances they are for him jarringly out of place. It is the teacher in his classroom, not the platform entertainer, whose advance training is our subject.

Second, we are primarily concerned with the training of teachers for beginning and general students. Advanced students, English "majors," may be assumed to know already what literature is trying to do and how it should be approached. They need more information about it, a wider experience of it, more of the special discipline it offers. For them, oral interpretation by the teacher, though often desirable, is not so necessary as for these other students who often do not have a clear idea of the aim of literature and have to be shown about it; often they have to be convinced that it is worth their serious attention. To say that such training is really a matter for secondary schools, while probably true, is to shut one's eyes to actual conditions. There are more of these general students in college who need this training than there are English "majors" or graduate students in English; yet the training of teachers for these general students has not been paid much attention. What such students need is someone who can make literature a living thing to them and demonstrate its value. As an aid to this, oral interpretation is almost indispensable. Playing of good records, sure to be suggested as a possible substitute, will not give the same results. In a personal rendition the teacher, by brief asides, slight adaptations of voice and facial expression and even posture—of course, nothing even approaching acting—can make intimate and immediate that which the best record possible will leave

impersonal. Records are useful as comparisons, but to have to depend on them alone is often impractical and always lamentable.

To mention briefly what can be accomplished with oral interpretation: First, it can insure that the selection is read in the right spirit—the serious as serious, the humorous as humorous, the ironic as ironic. Second, it guarantees that the student is not merely hurriedly scanning the selection for its superficial idea. Third, by intelligent phrasing, pace, and emphasis the basic structure can be shown without extended discussion. Fourth, especially important with poetry, the subtle suggestions of rhythm and of vowel and consonant color, and the meaningful variety of tone and imagery, almost impossible to point out explicitly without destructive boredom, can be effectively demonstrated. Fifth, reading a selection aloud insures a view of it as a whole. And especially important with plays and other pieces intended for an audience is the creation in the group of a real audience response. It is remarkable how students looking back over their scholastic experience will mention gratefully the oral reading of some piece or other without apparently any recollection of lectures, discussions, or explanatory notes. Is not the obvious explanation that experiencing literature leaves a more permanent effect than simply talking about it?

III

Valuable as oral interpretation is, our present graduate training, as noted above, pays no attention to it. Adverse criticism of graduate training in English is, of course, an old story. A recent comprehensive summary is F. D. Millett's in *The Rebirth of Liberal Education*, which emphasizes its exaggerated spe-

cialization, the pedantry and triviality of the doctor's dissertations it produces, and the slow drying-up of the interests and personalities of the students who turn them out. And Mark Van Doren in *Liberal Education* calls this training "a scandal too seldom denounced." Of course it has never pretended to train teachers of literature itself, but rather to furnish a discipline certainly very much needed and to extend the field of human knowledge. I am not here concerned with the training of those students who are preparing to teach advanced courses, except to emphasize that the training of teachers of introductory and general courses must be different.

At once, however, an important fact has to be considered. Introductory and general courses are likely to be handed over to teachers of less experience and of lower rank in the academic hierarchy. No really capable and ambitious graduate student is going to limit his future by preparing for a little-honored and little-rewarded position when he is confident that he can just as surely prepare for a better one. Unless teachers of general courses, trained for the purpose, are as fully recognized by their colleagues, by administrative officers, by educational rating associations, and in annual budgets as being engaged in as equally respectable an enterprise as those who teach advanced courses and who do publishable research, there is no use in suggesting a different training for them. Theoretically, there should be a degree other than a Ph.D. arranged for persons not centering on research. But because of the inertia of the academic world and its fanatic devotion to labels, the Ph.D. degree probably must be left to designate the official goal for advanced work of any kind, and every precaution must be taken that the work substituted for

the work now done be as much or more a test of ability and make fully as great demands on time and effort. The training must be different but it must not be easy. Once it is established, it should be given full professional rating, and nobody should be recommended to teach these general college courses in English who does not have the special abilities and training they demand. Teachers equipped to give them must be recognized as specialists as much as those who offer Anglo-Saxon, Elizabethan lyric poetry, eighteenth-century novels, the history of literary criticism, or any other advanced course.

IV

Just how should the training of these teachers of general courses differ from that of teachers of advanced specialized courses? Many requirements should certainly be the same for both—they should have a knowledge of classical, biblical, and English backgrounds; of foreign languages; of language itself as a subject of interest; of criticism—both its theory and its history; and of literature from as wide a field as possible. The main difference would appear in putting less emphasis on the dissertation and more on a broader culture and on oral interpretation.

This does not mean a neglect of training in research. The methods of historical investigation offer too important a discipline for any advanced student of literature to omit it. For those whose main interest is to be research and the teaching of advanced courses the formal dissertation is an indispensable requirement. But is it necessary that every graduate student put in a year or more on such an enterprise? One possible substitute can be found in Skeat's suggestion, made long ago, of verification of all

the references in articles or books on an important topic. This could be carried out more briefly but would offer as much real discipline as many doctor's theses do now, especially if the assigned topic has given rise to divergent views, which the student would put against each other to draw from them a considered judgment. Such a study would, it is true, not compel a search for elusive or new material; nor would it be likely to afford the student that special joy of research which comes with the discovery of even one grain of new knowledge. But it would avoid for persons who are not intending to continue research the waste which now buries in library stacks the results of long hours of toil to make such an infinitesimal discovery and the narrowing of interests and the distortion of values which critics of the present requirements for the Ph.D. degree lament. This exercise, if well chosen, would on the positive side at least show the student what literary research in general is like. It would acquaint him with important literary sources; it would enforce upon him the important difference of fact, inference, and speculation; and it would show him how difficult it is really to prove anything—certainly all salutary experiences. The whole study should, of course, be carefully written up in detail. Or other exercises equally disciplinary and informing might surely be devised, but all admittedly only exercises not pretending to be original contributions to knowledge, the standard which now so often forces students into obscure and unimportant byways. Students who proved especially fitted for research should certainly be encouraged to go on with it, and, if worth-while original discoveries do turn up, they should of course be made the most of.

But for the student preparing prima-

rily to teach general courses, some such requirement in the methods of research should suffice, and he should devote the time so saved to something more necessary for his special work. This might well be given to getting a real acquaintance with the literature in one or more foreign languages—not a mere reading knowledge; to philosophy, psychology, biology (biology as the science most informing on human development); to the arts other than literature. There is certainly no lack of material which the general teacher would find useful and which would make the amount of work he did fully equivalent to that now required. To be mentioned also is perhaps work in creative writing, though its evaluation on a graduate level is, I think, difficult.

V

I have already given some of the reasons why I think part of the time saved from the dissertation should be given to oral interpretation. I have emphasized its value as a tool in teaching; but it is more than that, for it suggests a wide scheme of study and a different educational discipline from that now usually offered for graduate students in literature. If it were thoroughly carried out, it would integrate much of our work in English, centering it on the primary purpose of literature as many of our present methods fail to do.

Perhaps the best way to indicate what the program of this part of the graduate training should be is to describe the sort of final doctor's examination the candidate would be expected to pass in it. This is, one must note, only a part of his examination as a whole. Most of that examination would deal, as it does today, with literature, linguistics, history, criticism, etc. The examination in oral inter-

pretation would mainly be taking the place of that on the dissertation.

The candidate would have selected and have had approved some months in advance of the examination a considerable body of literature which he would *by himself* prepare to offer—for example, a Shakespeare play, Shakespeare's sonnets, a book or more of *Paradise Lost*, a selection of important lyrics by different authors, some piece of prose—anything worth working on and suitable for reading aloud; preferably, too, something on which a considerable amount of scholarship has been based. At the examination the examining board, made up if possible not of his immediate instructors, especially in reading, should ask him to read a passage selected by them from his chosen text. I must repeat that he would not be expected to exhibit the skill of a public artist but only to give such an intelligent rendition as a teacher would properly use in his classroom. The reading of a brief passage—one done in even five or ten minutes—would, if discriminately chosen, show unmistakably his aesthetic taste and mental ability. A false tone would betray sentimentality; a false emphasis, a lack of understanding; a slighted change in mood, an unalert mind. An effective rendering, on the other hand, would manifest a sense of structure and proportion, a comprehension of the aesthetic qualities of the piece, and an appreciation of its emotional nuances. Then to prove his scholarship, the reading should be supplemented by questions, not only on the reading itself—such as why there was a pause here, an emphasis there, a certain intonation—but also on the importance to the whole of the passage chosen and on the precise scholarship connected with it. Anything having a bearing on the actual meaning and interpretation would

be in place. That certainly would allow sufficient investigation of the candidate's accuracy and thoroughness. The examination should be thorough enough to uncover glib facility; it should be a real test of intellectual power, but it should also take into account aesthetic values as written tests seldom do. The examination should, of course, not be limited to the passage or passages read; the piece as a whole should be considered and the published scholarship and criticism on it.

What should preparation for such a test involve? Certainly study of a rigorous kind—thoughtful analysis, interpretation at least as creative as that of the actor or the concert pianist or even the literary critic, and as much discernment and judgment as most dissertations. But to turn loose the average graduate student of today to prepare by himself for such an examination would probably lead to disaster. In the first place, such work demands a sound preliminary training. The student as an undergraduate should have had a fundamental course in oral interpretation, acquainting him with its problems and its most useful techniques, and enough voice training at least to avoid unpleasant tones and habits. A qualifying examination on these matters at the beginning of his graduate work is almost a necessity. Such an examination would also show what is even more important—whether temperamentally he is fitted for such work. Some of our most intelligent graduate students in English are so shy or so lacking in force or so uncommunicative and totally unresponsive to audience reactions that, though they understand admirably, they communicate not at all. Such graduate students may be admirably fitted for research; they may become helpful guides in it for others, excellent instructors for advanced students, even really great

scholars. But they are fatally destructive of interest in classes for general students. If a requirement from instructors of skill in oral interpretation served only to keep such persons from teaching general courses, it would justify itself. On the other hand, there are a good many graduate students in English now who do have a real power of communication but with whom it atrophies under our present system of training or who abandon the teaching of English altogether because they have no encouragement in the use of this ability.

Once the student has demonstrated that he can effectively engage in oral interpretation, he should, as part of his graduate work, continue to study and practice it in courses planned for this purpose though the emphases of these courses should be more on the subject matter than its rendition. Perhaps this statement requires explanation. A single point will serve to illustrate it. One essential quality of effective reading is variety. But we have all been repelled by readers who, having been told this, in consequence impose an artificial and meaningless variety on the material they present. What of course is necessary is a real understanding of the literature itself. If it is well written, it will itself provide the necessary variety.

And so with most of the techniques of reading. They can properly be learned and practiced only in connection with the literature that requires them, and their proper use depends on an understanding of that literature. Mabel Smith Reynolds has said (*Notes on Oral Interpretation*):

The only excuse for reading aloud to others is to reveal something which the casual reader would fail to sense. . . . One must first study carefully one's selection, work thoughtfully and imaginatively on its background, hunt for suggestions and implications in seemingly simple phrases, and learn to think what was

probably in the author's mind, *between* his phrases, sentences, or lines of poetry, so that each new idea comes out vividly and with significance.

Thus oral interpretation suggests a distinctive method of approach for the intensive study of whole realms of literature, some of it now often neglected. We emphasize now periods and types and individual authors, social and literary influences, sometimes the history of ideas, sometimes critical and aesthetic theories. Most of these approaches tend, however, to get away from the literature itself. The backgrounds are always claiming our principal attention; the emotional, sometimes even the intellectual, content of the piece, especially as a work of art, gets scant attention. Study for the purpose of reading aloud is inevitably concerned primarily with aesthetic and intellectual content. Of course, novels, essays, criticism, or philosophic discussions should be approached in a different way—these last, perhaps, by the system of analysis of ideas developed at the University of Chicago by Dr. Ronald Crane and his associates, which also has the advantage of centering attention on the literature itself. But for all material suitable for reading aloud, especially for stylistic prose, for most poetry, and for all drama, oral interpretation sets a definite discipline. The graduate student, therefore, as part—but only part—of his preparation, should have considerable experience in studying literature from this point of view.

Oral interpretation is also, it should be noted, a form of publication. Administrative officers, in recommending instructors for raises in rank and salary, put a good deal of emphasis on publication of books and articles. Their justification of this policy is that publication shows that the author is mentally active and has

not succumbed to the academic routine of classes and committees and that he is willing to submit his work to the considered judgment of his peers. The oral interpretation of an important piece of literature meets both these tests. It is creative, as I have pointed out already, and it offers an opportunity for critical appraisement of a variety of powers, more indeed than do most scholarly articles. Its main disadvantage falls on the reader himself because it does not make him known off his own campus.

VI

These proposals, I am aware, are not likely to be generally adopted or even to be viewed with favor by departments of English. Their present personnel has been brought up under a different discipline. Nor will speech departments approve this plan, since it calls for a greater unity of work with literature and with the emphasis on the literature. Oral in-

terpretation is not, of course, a solution for all the problems in the teaching of literature, nor is increased emphasis upon it the only desirable change in the training of graduate students. It is also open to a variety of abuses, as is all activity which tries to reach the emotions of the public—dangers of sentimentalism, sensationalism, superficiality, bad taste in general. Perhaps, however, these are no more to be feared than pedantry and rigidity. Oral interpretation may also easily be used too much to the neglect of other, less attractive procedures. But if literature is to be presented as an art, some changes in the training of its teachers must, I believe, be instituted. What can at least be attempted now is to introduce oral interpretation as a discipline for such graduate students as are naturally fitted for it and to recognize skill in it as comparable in importance with skill in linguistics, literary history, and formal criticism.

Suggestions for the Reading of Themes

GEORGE S. WYKOFF¹

SOME such assumptions as the following led the chairman of freshman composition at Purdue University to compile a list of "Suggestions for the Reading of Themes." They are primarily for the guidance of a specific staff, but they may be of value to all readers of students' compositions.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. That the purpose of composition is the achievement of correct, clear, and effective writing.

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2. That the more writing a student does, the more likely he is to approach or achieve the goal of composition.

3. That a study of, a knowledge of, and exercises in functional grammar, punctuation principles, spelling, diction, sentence structure, and style are valuable aids in achieving this purpose but are in no sense a substitute for the writing itself.

4. That the teacher (i.e., the theme-reader—"the reader over the student's shoulder") can offer the student profitable criticism and suggestions.

5. That, in view of the large number of

students in composition classes and the comparatively heavy teaching load, making it impossible for the student to have as much writing as he needs, the weekly (or semiweekly, or biweekly) theme should be read with all possible care.

Some of the suggestions must be qualified according to the reader's available time (i.e., size of classes and number of teaching hours). And special attention is called to the word, "Suggestions." These are not commands for any staff member, anywhere; many a teacher will undoubtedly have an effective system of his own, even though he has not stated it in words. But even such a teacher may find several additional hints worth his practicing; he will at least agree that the suggestions are, from both the teacher's and the student's point of view, possible aids in the achieving of the purpose of composition.

SUBJECTS

1. Specific, limited subjects suitable for a 350-word paper should be assigned. If general subjects are given, the student should be required to limit them.

2. Subjects for outside papers should be assigned at least two class periods before they are due. Subjects for class papers should be assigned at the beginning of the hour. Occasionally, the general topic for class papers can be given at the preceding hour, for students to think about.

3. Most satisfactory subjects are those concerning which students have had some experience or may be expected to have formed some opinion. Subjects for the first theme or the first two or three themes might well be personal or autobiographical, covering the student's scholastic strengths and weaknesses, his background, his physical and intellectual limitations. Students can be dealt with more

fairly and understandingly if the teacher has this information.

4. In number, there should be at least as many as four subjects, and there should not be more than twelve or fifteen—for each assignment.

LENGTH

5. Outside themes are 350 words in length usually. Class themes are as long as the student can make them in the allotted time. A slow student should aim at $1\frac{1}{4}$ – $1\frac{1}{2}$ pages; a faster student at 2 or $2\frac{1}{4}$ pages.

ADAPTATION

6. Somewhere, preferably in the upper left-hand corner, the student should name the specific person or group for whom the theme is theoretically written. The teacher should judge the theme, in part, on the basis of its adaptation to this reader.²

ORGANIZATION

7. Beneath the title the student should write an outline for his theme. This outline should be complete and correct in form and should contain, for a short theme, a major division for each important paragraph. By means of the outline, both teacher and student have an easy check on the plan of organization.

8. Occasionally, topic sentences should be underlined and should be checked against the outline. If students have trouble finding their own topic sentences,

² "Assignments should always specify the audience, or the student should select one, whether the immediate class, the whole school group, or some other, defined perhaps in terms of a periodical. Only in this way can he focus his work, and only in this way can it be judged, for expression is not just good or bad but appropriate or inappropriate to a certain purpose." "The position of a teacher of composition is not that of audience or reader but that of chairman or editor" (Porter G. Perrin, "Maximum Essentials in Composition," *College English*, April, 1947, pp. 357, 356).

they should be required to write these topic sentences (each one a sentence-statement for each major division in the outline) directly under the outline, and then incorporate them in the appropriate place in the theme.

FORM

9. The form and indorsement of each theme should conform to the suggestions made in the printed *Information Booklet* (general information about margins, spacing, using one side of paper, signature, and the like).

10. Outside themes should be in ink or typewritten and should be relatively clean copy, except for last-reading corrections. Because of numerous corrections and revisions in class themes, some staff members have these written in pencil; others, because of student use of very hard-lead or very soft-lead pencils, have all class themes in ink also.

REVISION

11. Emphasis must be constantly placed on students' reading, rereading, and revising of themes before they are turned in. In class themes, ten minutes' notice should be given before the end of the hour for this rereading and revision. An unfinished class theme, reread and corrected, is preferable to a completed theme unread and filled with serious and/or careless errors.

READING TIME

12. Each staff member should be reasonably prompt in reading and returning themes to students. Every effort should be made to have themes returned at one of the three class meetings following the class period when they were turned in. Rarely should themes be retained, ungraded, longer than one week.

SECOND READING

13. Whenever time permits, the teacher should read each theme a second time. It is surprising how many errors are discovered which were missed on the first reading.

COMMENTS

14. Comments should be written on most themes, even though these comments are very brief. This practice is especially important when there are few individual conferences. Students often complain, probably without much reason, that they do not know what is wrong with their writing.

15. Comments on themes should be specific, dealing with the general effect of the theme as a whole, with the skill or lack of skill shown in adaptation or organization, or with violations of concrete matters of composition being covered in the course. Beautifully phrased comments about style, aesthetics, artistic standards, and the like are usually beyond the student's comprehension and application.

READING ALOUD

16. The teacher should read to the class two, three, or four themes each week to illustrate general excellence or skilful application of the principles of composition being studied.

GRADING STANDARDS

17. Grading standards listed in the printed *Information Booklet* should be more or less rigidly adhered to. (These standards concern errors in spelling and serious errors in grammar and punctuation.)³ Until certain principles—except

³ Purdue's passing grades, from high to low, are 6, 5, 4, and 3. Failing grades are 2 and 1. A grade of 2 or 1 is usually given a theme which contains one or more of the following errors: (a) three different mis-

those explaining very serious errors—are covered in class, it is possible that errors may be judged less severely; after their discussion in class, they should be judged more severely.

18. Grading should not be influenced upward or downward merely because the teacher likes or dislikes the subject chosen, approves or objects to the point of view adopted, or agrees or disagrees with the ideas expressed.

19. Throughout the semester it is preferable to err, in grading, on the side of severity rather than on the side of leniency. Justice can be done at the end of the semester by raising the student's grade if conditions warrant. The reverse of this policy, i.e., giving the student a lower grade (one justified by his work but not by the grades given him during the semester) can cause and has caused much subsequent confusion and trouble in the English office.

20. About the grades of 1 (for many serious errors) and 2 (for several serious errors): There are no statistics concerning the average number of 1 and 2 grades for a set of papers, but some agreement should be reached about the difference between 1 and 2 grades. Some staff members give many 1 grades on themes, and some give almost none on the basis that too many 1's hopelessly discourage the student.

MARKING ERRORS

21. The teacher should mark every error that he sees, using, where the error occurs, underlining or encircling or a check mark or an *X*.

spelled words: (b) one or two serious errors in grammar; (c) one sentence fragment; (d) one "run-on sentence"; (e) one "comma splice"; (f) one serious misuse of semicolon; (g) marked lack of clearness in organization or content.

22. For every error there should be a symbol indicating its kind. The most effective place for the symbols is in the left-hand margin.

23. Since the student should inform himself about his errors and their correction, the teacher should give, whenever possible, a specific page number covering the error (for this purpose, a time-saving aid is "The Theme-Reader's Guide," a one-page mimeographed listing of the major and most of the minor errors, with handbook page numbers).

CORRECTION SHEET

24. There should be a correction sheet for every theme. Each student should be given specific directions for preparing this correction sheet, which consists of a standard-sized page with a vertical line drawn about 1 inch from the left edge and another vertical line down the middle. In the narrow column the student should write the symbol and the handbook page reference. In the wide left column, to be labeled "Incorrect," the student should write the indicated materials from his theme. In the right column, to be labeled "Correct," he should write this same material with sufficient change in spelling or phrasing or punctuation to eliminate the error or errors. Occasionally, instead of a correction sheet, the student should reorganize and rewrite the entire theme.

25. Every serious error and often some of the less serious ones should be corrected by the student. The teacher should indicate which errors are to be corrected by underlining the appropriate symbols in the margin. The teacher should also indicate how much material is to be included on the correction sheet and for this purpose should use some consistent mechanical means such as double

parallel lines // . . . // or brackets or other inclosure marks, like ⟨ . . . ⟩.

26. *Every correction sheet should be returned to the student*, after the teacher has checked it with the theme for completeness and accuracy. In the past, students have complained that they have not known whether their corrections were acceptable or not.

ERROR CHART

27. The teacher should encourage each student to keep an individual chart of his most serious and most frequently occurring errors.

CONFERENCES AND THEMES

28. The basis for conferences with individual students should be the themes, and the more serious errors (general effect, adaptation, organization, and errors within the sentence) should be dis-

cussed. The first conference with each student should be held, if possible, during the first 4 or 5 weeks of the semester. (A preliminary step toward such scheduling of conferences is obtaining from each student a list of his free hours.)

THEME-FILING

29. Each teacher should retain the themes after the correction sheets have been checked and should file them in the theme files in his office or arrange them according to a system which is easily understandable. Not only are themes then easily available for conferences, but also occasions frequently arise during the temporary absence of a staff member or after the close of the semester (especially in June) when it is imperative that the department head or the course chairman consult these papers in investigating, explaining, or justifying a grade or grades given to students.

Current English Forum

HAROLD B. ALLEN, ADELINE C. BARTLETT, MARGARET M. BRYANT (*chairman*)

JAMES B. MCMILLAN, KEMP MALONE, RUSSELL THOMAS

CAN AND MAY

The use of the verb *can*, rather than *may*, to indicate permission is colloquial. There is a distinction between written and spoken usage in this matter. The schoolmastering to which Americans have been exposed in the primary grades has trained them in formal, expository writing to use the verb *may* when requesting permission. But the moment they speak or attempt to reproduce the rhythms of speech in fictional or dramatic writing, they resort to the use of *can* more frequently than *may* as a permissive.

In literary usage may be found such expressions as: "If one may venture to express a judgment . . . I should say that Cromwell and his followers are to be praised for having fought well in both the civil wars." "May I give you a technical specification of the car?"¹ But the narrator of a radio play will say: "The shopwindows are clever and bright and full of the things you've always thought about—and there's no charge—and a cat can look at them or a king."² Or a character in a play will protest: "First you say we can do something and then you say we can't."³

Beyond labeling it as a colloquialism, the various grammars and books of English usage have very little to say about the use of *can* as a permissive. All dictionaries list "to be competent or permitted to" as one of the definitions of *can*. *Webster's*, however, says that "*can* always refers to some form of possibility. . . . But where simple permission is referred to, *may* should be used. 'May I' (not can I) use your ruler?" *Funk and Wagnalls*' says substantially the same thing, and comments: "The colloquial use of *can* for *may* substitutes a moral for a physical

¹ *Atlanta Monthly*, Vol. 182, No. 6; Vol. 183, No. 1 (December, 1948; January, 1949), *passim*.

² Arch Oboler, *Oboler Omnibus* (New York: Duell, Sloane & Pierce, 1945), p. 234.

³ Harry Brown, *The Sound of Hunting* (New York: Knopf, 1946), p. 103.

possibility: 'You can go' (without breach of duty, since you have permission). *May* is, however, in this sense at once more exact and more elegant."

The use of *can* to indicate permission occurs on all colloquial levels. The term "colloquial" is too often interpreted as being synonymous with "slang," "vulgarity." It is not so used here. "Colloquial" is used here in its primary meaning of "spoken." Furthermore, the fact that an expression occurs in the usage of uneducated people does not preclude its being used on other levels as well. One notices when the Cockney errs in his use of *h's* but ignores his frequent correct use of that sound. Similarly one may hear the question "Can I have a cigarette?" asked by the truck-driver and the college professor. In *The Sound of Hunting*, Harry Brown puts the expression "You can't move a g—d finger unless they say you can"⁴ into the mouth of an uneducated man. But he gives the lines "You can't talk to me like that. No man alive can talk to me like that"⁵ and "Well, he can stay there till Christmas for all I care"⁶ to educated men.

The question as to the "correctness" in using *can* as a permissive, therefore, rests on whether the expression occurs frequently enough on the standard level of spoken English to be accepted.

The examples I have collected show that this usage is established standard colloquial English, and this fact is reinforced by the evidence given in *Facts about Current English Usage*, in which Marckwardt discusses the expression "Can I be excused from this class?" He writes:

. . . This is placed among the established usages on the basis of the rating of the linguists, more than three-quarters of whom approved the expression as colloquial. . . .⁷

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95. ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 120. ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁷ A. H. Marckwardt, *Facts about English Usage* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1938), pp. 37, 126.

Why, despite the efforts of the schoolmaster, does this usage of *can* as a permissive remain an accepted colloquialism? Every educated person retains some memory of how a teacher inflicted some small humiliation upon him in his efforts to eradicate the use of *can I?* in favor of *may I?* Yet the schoolmaster has been only partly successful. The American no longer uses *can* as a permissive in formal writing. But he says it frequently.

I believe that this usage continues for three reasons: (1) There is an element of possibility implied in many requests for permission. (2) *Can* and *may* are synonyms for the meaning of objective possibility, and this may set an analogical pattern for *can* to be used for *may* in other meanings, especially when (3) there is a feeling that *can* is more emphatic than *may*.

When an individual requests permission to do something, he is often suggesting a course of action that may or may not be agreed to. It is, in part, this implication of possibility that causes a speaker to select *can* rather than *may* in phrasing his sentence. *Webster's*, for instance, states that an individual confronted with the situation of having to pass an armed guard at a barrier may well ask "Can I pass the guard?" that is, "will the conditions permit me to pass?" Such an element of possibility is present when the seriously injured soldier comments: "I ask because I want to know how much longer I can stay here," or when one character restrains another with "No one can leave" in radio plays by Arch Oboler.⁸

Can and *may* are synonyms for the meaning "expressing possibility; to be permitted or enabled by the conditions of the case."⁹ Curme writes:

The auxiliary *can* is developing in the direction of *may*. It has become a subjunctive form when it expresses a possibility due to circumstances, having here the same force as *may*, only stronger, and, like *may*, not capable of

indicating past time when used in the past tense: "We *can* (stronger than *may*) expect opposition from vested interests" (*London Times*).¹⁰

In the following sentences, for instance, *can* or *may* might be interchanged.

We *can* face the future with confidence if we "retain the moral integrity . . . the readiness to sacrifice that finally crushed the Axis." . . . that the devastating influence of the bomb . . . *may* affect the land and its wealth . . . for centuries through the persistence of radio activity. Only then *can* we come to economic implementation. . . . specific questions upon whose answers the fate of this country *may* depend."

This usage may well set up an analogical pattern for *can* to become the synonym for *may* in another meaning.

Finally, I would like to pick up Curme's idea that, in the foregoing usage, *can* is thought of as being more emphatic than *may*. In most of the examples I have collected of the use of *can* as a permissive there is a degree of emotion implied either in the quotation itself or in the situation which gives rise to the expression. In "The Sound of Hunting," we find the soldiers under tension and anxiety about the safety of one of their comrades. Among the lines spoken can be found these: "Anybody *can* find a story in this place, he *can* have it. He *can* have the place, too. . . ."¹¹

It is difficult always to account for linguistic developments, and many factors are usually involved in the creation and maintenance of any given expression. These three points, therefore, are offered merely as suggestions to explain the continuance of the use of *can* as a permissive despite the efforts of prescriptive grammarians to eliminate it.

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⁸ George O. Curme, *Syntax* (New York: D. C. Heath & Co., 1931), p. 411.

⁹ *Atlantic Monthly*, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁸ Oboler, *op. cit.*, pp. 9, 27.

⁹ O.E.D.

Round Table

AN INTEGRATED FOUR-SKILLS COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCE

What makes conversation interesting? That is the question I use to set the stage for a number of functional assignments designed to teach more effective communication. Student attention is readily focused on the problem of how to communicate personal experiences in an interesting and satisfying manner. A preliminary class discussion invariably gives the teacher an opportunity to emphasize the frequency and importance of such conversational raw material.

Here in summary form is the procedure followed:

1. *Purposive listening*.—I begin by telling the class I am going to read them an anecdote, someone's personal experience. They are to listen carefully, for in this situation as in life they will have an opportunity to retell the experience. In short, here is an interesting story for them to remember for subsequent use.

With our students I have found a short bit from Wiggam's essay, "The Ten Marks of an Educated Man," very useful—the story of Old John Crosby, "the best farmer in Johnson County." But almost any autobiography, biography, or collection of informal essays will furnish suitable selections. You might even include that portion of Franklin's *Autobiography* that suggested part of this procedure—his account of how he learned to write. Some of the short episodes from Clarence Day's *Life with Father* or Percy Maxim's "life with father" are also excellent, as are some of the stories in such features as "Life in These United States." The experiences may be serious, humorous, or exciting, depending on the class needs and interests.

2. *Purposive writing*.—As soon as I have

finished reading the selection, I suggest that friendly letters as well as conversation require an informal conversational style. The students are asked to imagine they are writing this story in a letter to a friend, writing it exactly as they remember it so as not to lose any of the desirable qualities of vividness and interest that characterized the original.

3. *Purposive reading*.—As they finish their written account, they are given a mimeographed copy of the original selection and asked to make a careful word-for-word comparison of the two versions. This critical reflective reading is intended to lead to a better appreciation of story-telling skills. Guidance is needed here for best results. Students are told to note differences in diction (concreteness, exactness, verbs), in sentence construction (length, type, subordination, and co-ordination), in mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation), in the handling of dialogue (direct versus indirect, levels of usage), and in the ratio between narration and description. Of course all these matters are not covered with any one selection. The nature of the selection and the needs and interests of the students will govern that choice. Students are directed to prepare to discuss particular differences noted and conclusions reached.

4. *Purposive speaking (and listening)*.—The last step is a class discussion to evaluate what was learned and to reach some helpful conclusions about the effective communication of experiences. The discussion may be concluded by asking students to suggest specific conversational situations where the story could be introduced appropriately and what transitional devices might be used to adapt the story to different situations.

This purposeful integration of the four language skills around simulated life-situations should tend to break down classroom

barriers and develop an awareness and concern with language that will carry over into life—into conversation with its speaking and listening facets, into letter-writing, and into reading. And this approach is sufficiently functional to motivate strong student interest and sufficiently adaptable to meet the needs of almost any class.

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LATIN AND GREEK IN THE FRESHMAN VOCABULARY

A bishop learning to play golf missed a two-inch putt. "Tut, tut," he muttered. Said the caddy: "Mister, you'll never learn golf with a vocabulary like that."

Believing that success in other pursuits besides golf might be influenced by vocabulary, I devised "A Vocabulary Game" for use in freshman English classes. For eleven years this game has been a perennial at the University of North Dakota, where I first tried it; and today my composition classes at John Muir College are tackling it with zest. "A Vocabulary Game" was briefly described in *Word Study* several years ago, and thereafter a number of requests came to me for copies. Assuming, then, that other English teachers may wish to use this game in their classes, I submit a copy of it here.

Permission is here readily granted the readers of *College English* to mimeograph "A Vocabulary Game" for use in their own classes. I'll be glad to learn what luck others may have with it.

A VOCABULARY GAME*

How extensive is your vocabulary? Do you know there is an amazing correlation between size of vocabulary and success in college and business? Magazine surveys have shown that business executives and social leaders ranked consistently higher than other groups in their familiarity with words.

The study of words is as fascinating a hobby

* The game is taken from the author's *To Stimulate Reading* (1948), pp. 147-49. Reprinted by permission.

as photography, music, or painting. Entertain yourself for ten minutes each day by making "dictionary discoveries"; in six months you will acquire powers of comprehension and creation in literature and a certainty of diction that will be new to you and surprising to your friends.

First, familiarize yourself with the more common Latin and Greek roots and prefixes, some of which appear below. Keep this list. Let it be a nucleus for further word studies.

Directions: Fill the blanks² at the right with derivatives of the forms at the left. Single examples are given. Try to supply three others. If in doubt about a word, check its etymology in a dictionary.

LATIN		
Verbs	Meanings	
amo, amatus	love	amatory
audio, auditus	hear	auditor
capio, captus	take	capacity
credo, creditus	believe	creed
dico, dictus	speak	verdict
duco, ductus	lead	aqueduct
fido, fisus	believe	fidelity
fluo, fluxus	flow	fluent
jungo, junctus	join	junction
loquor, locutus	talk	eloquent
mitto, missus	send	missile
moveo, motus	move	remove
nascor, natus	be born	nascent
pono, positus	place	deposit
porto, portatus	carry	porter
scribo, scriptus	write	describe
specto,		
spectatus	look	spectacle
spiro, spiratus	breathe	perspire
venio, ventus	come	adventure
video, visus	see	visible
voco, vocatus	call	revoke

Adjectives and Nouns		
anima	life	animate
aqua	water	aquarium
annus	year	annuity
caput, capitis	head	capital
centum	hundred	cent
finis	end	define

* To save space, these have been omitted. He has three columns of them, with the heading "English Derivatives." Thus:

amatory, _____, _____,
auditor, _____, _____,

ROUND TABLE

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LATIN		Prefixes		above, extremely across, through three beyond, extremely not one	soprano transfer tripod ultramodern unsound uniform
Adjectives and Nouns		super			
frater	brother	fratricide	trans		
grex, gregis	flock	segregate	tri		
lex, legis	law	legal	ultra		
litera	letter	illiterate			
locus	place	location	un		
malus	bad, evil	malaria	uni		
manus	hand	manual			
mater	mother	maternal			
mors, mortis	death	mortal			
novus	new	novelty	Greek Words		
omnis	all	omnipotent	anthropos	man	anthropology
opus, operis	work	opera	aristos	the best	aristocracy
pater	father	paternal	astron	star	astrology
pes, pedis	foot	biped	autos	self	autograph
signum	sign	insignia	biblos	book	Bible
tempus,			bios	life	biography
temporis	time	temporary	chroma	color	chromatic
terminus	end, boundary	terminal	chronos	time	chronic
terra	earth	terrace	cosmos	world, order	cosmopolitan
urbs, urbis	city	urban	crypto	hide	cryptogram
			cyclos	circle, wheel	cyclone
			deca	ten	decalogue
Prefixes			demos	people	democracy
a, ab	from	abstract	derma	skin	epidermis
ad	to	adjacent	dynamis	power	dynasty
ante	before	anteroom	ethnos	race	ethnic
bi, bis	two, twice	bicycle	gramma	writing	telegram
circum	around	circumference	grapho	write	graphite
cum, col, com,	with		heteros	other	heterodox
con, cor		consort	homos	same	homogeneous
contra	against	contradict	hydro	water	hydrant
de	from, down (negative)	decry	lithos	stone	lithograph
di, dis	away, from (negative)	disbelief	logos	word, study	theology
e, ex	from	expel	metron	measure	meter
extra	beyond	extravagant	morphe	form	amorphous
in, im, il, ir	not	irregular	neuron	nerve	neurotic
in, im	in, into	induct	orthos	right, true	orthodox
inter	among, between	interchange	palaeos	ancient	paleology,
			pan	all	Pan-American
intra, intro	within, into	intra-state	pathos	feeling	pathology
multi	many	multiform	philos	loving	bibliophile
non	not	nonexistent	phone	sound	symphony
ob, op	against	obstacle	physis	nature	physiology
per	through	pervade	pseudes	false	pseudonym
post	after	postscript	psyche	mind, spirit	psychology
pre	before	prepay	pyr	fire	pyre
pro	for, forward	pronoun	sophia	wisdom	philosophy
re	back, again	return	technē	art	technique
retro	back, backward	retroactive	tele	far	telescope
semi	half	semiannual	theos	God	theology
sub, sup	under	subscribe	thermos	heat	thermometer

Prefxes	GREEK	
a, an	not	aseptic
amphi	around	amphitheater
ana	up, again	Anabaptist
anti	against	antidote
arch	chief	architect
dia	through	diagonal
epi	upon	epidemic
hyper	over, extremely	hypercritical
hypo	under	hypodermic
meta	after, over	metaphor
mono	one	monogamy
neo	new, recent	neophyte
para	beside	paraphrase
peri	around, about	periscope
poly	many	polygon
pro	before	prognostic
syn, sym, syl	together with	synopsis

GEORGE W. FEINSTEIN

JOHN MUIR COLLEGE
PASADENA, CALIFORNIAFINDING A HERE-AND-NOW USE
FOR LITERATURE

A classic is merely a piece of literature with certain universal qualities—qualities as pertinent to us today as they were to men of another day. The instructor's function is to present a classic to undergraduates in the light of its relevancy to their lives here and now. He cannot, like instructors of vocational and pre-professional subjects, leave Joe Doakes to see for himself that the matter studied is useful to him. A dollar-and-cent return is concrete and immediately comprehensible; the return from literature is not so, and so long as Professor Pddyman is greatly concerned with the "life and time" of authors, or with their "technique and art," just so long will Joe Doakes and his kind go right on thinking that literature has no value for them. For Joe Doakes is not interested in the poetry of Tennyson "seen against the background of that age"; he is interested—quite rightly—in the life and times of Joe Doakes.

Let us assume that Professor Pddyman proposes a revolutionary idea—to concen-

trate on the life and times of Joe Doakes, with no more attention to the author's life and times, technique and art, than may be given incidentally, as need arises, with a minimum of emphasis. How does he go about this in a college class of freshmen and sophomores, in a public school whose enrollment is on nonselective basis beyond graduation from high school? Let us consider a few examples.

He brings an adult version of *Gulliver's Travels* before Joe Doakes, who receives his first shock of interest to learn that the book is not a story for juveniles but the most bitter criticism of man and his civilization ever penned. Joe Doakes needs no help to enjoy the story interest, but he is trained to read literally, and his ability to recognize a satirical second meaning is not pronounced. The dispute between the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians strikes him as very funny, because the basis for the dispute was so silly. He has no idea that the story satirizes eighteenth-century church controversies. What an opportunity for the professor to deluge the class with his knowledge of eighteenth-century canonical and political history! But the converted Professor Pddyman refrains; he realizes that to understand the satire Joe Doakes needs no more knowledge of eighteenth-century England's dogmatic strife than may be expressed in half-a-dozen sentences. So he gives the time and attention he would previously have devoted to eighteenth-century England to twentieth-century American society. He leads Joe Doakes to see in the dispute between the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians a parallel to our own windy, furious differences over the questions with equally trivial bases; in the ropewalker's feat, to see our own political juggling; in the military display on the handkerchief field, our boasted military might; in the pull and tug between Lilliput and Blefuscus for possession of the uncontrollable might of Gulliver, our own problems in an atomic age; and to recognize in the Yahoos our own qualities of avarice and greed, our disposition to wage war and to be made miserable

by ambition, envy, or other discontent. As a summarizing topic by which to measure the here-and-now value of *Gulliver's Travels* Professor Peddyman dusts off one of those clichés formerly offered in defense of humanistic training—by now the cliché has begun to have meaning for Joe Doakes: "Knowledge of the classics should help one to view the passing scene critically." Joe Doakes will delight in applying incidents of *Gulliver's Travels* to the local and national scene today.

Gogol's *Dead Souls* lends itself to summarizing by chapters, and, by presenting the book thus in brief outline, Professor Peddyman enables Joe Doakes to see it as a whole. After discussing it in its large plan, he gives the following topic, in the light of which Joe Doakes will read the book: "Like all great art, *Dead Souls* is universal in significance; it is a social satire on Russia in Gogol's day, but the same greed, affection, and corruption are evident today; the book is thus as much a satire of our time and region as of early nineteenth-century Russia." On this topic, which serves also as the final examination, Joe Doakes writes, with a smile occasionally wreathing his face, a discussion of aspects of government and local society for which he sees a parallel in *Dead Souls*.

In Ibsen's *Doll's House* the student immediately recognizes that the problem presented is not characteristic of American marriages today, as in other of Ibsen's social dramas he recognizes superseded biologic and psychologic opinion. The effect that passing time has had upon these dramas may be used to impress the meaning of *classic*. If new science and changed society should render Ibsen's dramas irrelevant to our day, they would no longer be classic, for we should cease to read them. But time has not yet made these drams irrelevant to us; in fact, they have not been so greatly influenced by passing time as have other classics of the era that still live; the benevolent-dictator husband in *Doll's House*, for instance, is far less foreign to us than the sentimentality of Dickens and Thackeray. The student reads *Ghosts* in the light of an interpreting

topic: "Isben means by *ghosts* those restraining and crippling influences which we inherit—the effect of venereal disease, outworn beliefs and customs, fear of public opinion, and other taboos"; and this discussion of the drama turns to pointing out similar ghosts in society today and estimating the harm or value of their restraint. He reads *An Enemy of the People* by some such topic as: "Majority rule, whether by vote or public opinion, may endanger freedom of opinion and individual choice of right conduct," and he discusses the drama in connection with similar conditions he observes in his own environment.

Thus the student is introduced to a classic with a bent or guide toward its universal quality, its applicability to his own life and time. In *Madame Bovary* he is directed to see more than the story of a French woman of easy morals; through her he recognizes the shoddy romanticism so rife today in this land of soap operas and best-seller novels of romantic or erotic appeal. He reads *The Prince*, seeing within this nation and abroad, all that Machiavelli saw in Renaissance Italy. In Dante's *Inferno* he sees more than the spine-chilling visions of Doré; he sees man acquiring knowledge of evil until the "soul shall have her earthly freight." Soon the student begins to read thus without much direction; soon he begins quoting what he has previously read: he refers to the rope dancer of *Gulliver's Travels*, to Montaigne's "I am my book," to Machiavelli's theories of men and government—evidence enough that his knowledge of these classics does not exist in a vacuum apart from his life but has become a part of his thinking. It was a very wise man of today who said: Schools need not preach political doctrine to defend democracy; if they shape men capable of critical thought and trained in social attitudes, that is all that is necessary. And what better method of giving such training than through the classics read as applicable to here and now?

OLIE DEPEW

SOUTHERN OREGON COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Report and Summary

T. S. ELIOT DISCUSSES THE INFLUENCE of Edgar Allan Poe on the three French poets, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Valéry, in the autumn *Hudson Review*. In France, he says, the influence of Poe's poetry and poetic theories has been immense, whereas in England and in America it has been almost negligible. Mallarmé, he finds, was especially interested in Poe's technique of verse, Baudelaire in the personality of the man, and Valéry in his theory of poetry. Eliot, himself, in revaluing Poe, has become increasingly impressed with the importance of his work as a whole.

ELIOT'S OWN "MORAL DIALECTIC" is discussed by Hugh Kenner in the same issue of the *Hudson Review*. After surveying Eliot's work, Kenner finds that a certain pattern emerges, that Eliot's dialectic is a principle of organization of poetry, something used, not something taught. The pattern is this: Spiritual states, each of which is conceived dynamically as a tension and antithesis, are both poetic symbols and moral modes. For the resolution of these opponents there is a comprehensive symbol which is ambivalent. Kenner discusses numerous poems of Eliot to illustrate his point.

THE KENYON REVIEW IS STARTING a series of new papers evaluating the poetry of John Donne. The first appears in the autumn issue, "Donne and the Rhetorical Tradition," by William Empson, who at last writing was still teaching at the University of Peking. Empson's essay is primarily a provocative discussion of three comparatively recent books in their reference to Donne. These "comforting things to have in bed while guns fired over Peiping" are Rosamund Tuve's *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*, T. W. Baldwin's *Shakespeare's*

Small Latin and Less Greek, and Sister Miriam Joseph's *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language*. In a broad way, he feels these three authors are right, but "all the same the new research does not seem much use on detail."

"FICTION AND THE 'MATRIX OF ANALOGY'" is analyzed by Mark Schorer in the same issue of the *Kenyon Review*. Schorer probes the nature of the dominant metaphorical quality of *Persuasion*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Middlemarch*. He draws four general conclusions from the results of his analysis: metaphorical language gives any style its special quality; it defines, expresses, and evaluates the theme, and thereby demonstrates the limits and the special poise within those limits of a given imagination; it can be in novels, as in poems, the basis of structure; it reveals the character of any imaginative work.

A CANNY AND TEMPERATE SURVEY of the major criticisms now current concerning higher education for women is contributed to the November *Harper's* by Mirra Komarovsky in an article entitled "What Should Colleges Teach Women?" Dr. Komarovsky does not agree with the critics who think that the education of women should be radically different from that of men or that the liberal arts curriculums of the leading women's colleges should be discarded. She does think, however, that the curriculum should provide more vocational training and more training for family life, but, as she points out, reforms in these areas are equally needed in the men's colleges. Higher education for women does present more complex problems than that of men, she admits, because women's status in modern society is still full of inconsistencies. Nevertheless, she feels that too often col-

leges are held responsible for what is really society's problem. "The fact is," she says, "society today frustrates the legitimate interests of women and fails to give them a real choice in the matter of their lives." Her conclusion is well documented by merely two sentences from the recently issued volume *The Market for College Graduates*. There the opening lines of chapter v of the section on "The Position of Women" are these: "Women constitute a large underprivileged group in education and in the labor market, but are not alone in suffering from bias. In many respects the position of Negroes in the labor market is worse than that of women."

CONSIDERABLE LIGHT WAS SHED on the same problems some years ago by Mabel Barbee Lee in an essay, "The Dilemma of the Educated Woman," in the *Atlantic Monthly* (November, 1930). This is well worth rereading. After observing that the innumerable books which man has written about women are evidence of the fact that she has been an age-long problem to him, Miss Lee goes on to discuss the dilemma, which is the conflict within the educated woman herself between the desire to give full expression to her trained intellectual abilities and the urge to follow her primary instincts toward marriage, children, and a home. Like Dr. Komarovsky, Miss Lee finds that it is the attitude of society rather than education which is at fault. With the basic sex conflict sharpening in direct proportion to the increasing proportion of women graduates, Miss Lee's conclusion is worth some study. She says: "The educated woman of today may not fit exactly into the old ideas of wedded life. She is a new design in human material, and the lines of her garment will have to conform to the modern trend. She would not be a man's enemy, however, but his friend and fellow comrade in marriage where 'independence is equal, dependence mutual, and obligations reciprocal.'" Possibly the question should be "What Should Colleges Teach Men?" In finding a solution, however, society perhaps has gotten a head start on the college cur-

riculums, for the October *Ladies' Home Journal* reports that between 1940 and 1947 the number of children born to women college graduates jumped 81 per cent as contrasted with the rise of only 29 per cent for women who had finished only five years of elementary school.

THE CLEAREST DEFINITION OF basic existentialism which we have found forms part of an essay by David Gascoyne in the October *Horizon*. There Gascoyne discusses the philosophy of Leon Chestov, an existentialist who is much less well known than Sartre and apparently much less pessimistic. Gascoyne's explication is this: The *universal* state of human existence today is not one of continual, profound, everyday faith in the living God. If a person is today a wholehearted and practically consistent believer, then that person is an exception to the normal condition of man in the twentieth century. Existentialism undertakes to describe the universal, the *a priori* condition of human existence. It becomes clear, Gascoyne continues, after the initial examination of the ordinary state of man's existence has been made, that there exists in man a tendency toward something else, namely, toward a change from the "ordinary" state of existence into a more highly developed state. The state of the conscious and deliberate atheist and the state of the authentic Christian both represent a higher development of existence than the ordinary. "The only thing that any existentialist philosopher could be said to set out to convert anyone to," says Gascoyne, "is responsible choice."

"THE REAL TENNYSON," BY THE poet Alfred Graves, in the October *Quarterly Review* (British), points out that a whole new evaluation of Tennyson's poetry must now be made in the light of Sir Charles Tennyson's new full-length biography of his grandfather. That work completely negates the considerable body of criticism based on the concept of Tennyson as a poet in an ivory tower, Graves believes, and

"will necessitate the revision, rewriting, or relegation to obscurity of many pages in the history of nineteenth century literature." Sir Charles's book is by no means a startling exposé of a secret, indiscreet life, but rather it provides "a filling in of gaps left by the natural reticences of a generation nearer to the events and personalities described." Tennyson's father, a brilliant man, was unfairly disinherited by a younger brother. He took to drink, later went insane. There were many violent scenes in the rectory home of Tennyson's boyhood. Two of the poet's brothers, to whom he was devoted, went insane. The tragedies served to make even more poignant the premature death of his friend and his sister's fiancé, Arthur Hallam. Our new knowledge of these, Graves makes clear, adds to the poet's stature by "showing us through what tragedies and despair, what doubt and agonies, he clung to his belief in the immortality of the human soul."

"CHROMATIC RHYME," THE TERM which Jeremy Ingalls uses to cover all the many varieties of near-rhyme used by contemporary poets, serves also as the title of her article in *Word Study* for October. Miss Ingalls finds that this general concept is easily grasped by the uninitiate, who may then proceed to the special types—assonance, consonance, half-rhyme, etc. The cause of the vogue of chromaticism she finds in the effort of the poets to get into the sound of verse something of the tension of modern living and the interrelatedness among ideas and experiences. She points out that chromaticism began to appear at about the same time in music and in verse, not only of English-speaking writers, but also in French, German, and even Chinese. She insists that it was present in earlier poets and that it partly accounts for the richness and solidity of the blank verse of Shakespeare and Milton.

THE OCTOBER ISSUE OF *LIFE AND Letters* (British) is devoted to the works of contemporary Swedish writers. It includes

translations of several short stories, poems, part of a novel, and an essay "Swedish Literature of This Century," by Gunnar Ahlstrom. Apparently there is a wide discrepancy between the happy, socialistic society of Sweden and its national literature. The attitude of the younger writers is negative and critical and has produced a literature of languish and doubt. Ahlstrom discusses a wide range of writers from Strindberg and Selma Lagerlof to Stig Dogerman and Hjalmar Bergman. Examples of the writing of the last two appear in the same issue. This issue also contains an amusing description of what was apparently a very bad American production of *Hamlet* last summer at the Danish Festival at Elsinore, and a very fine one of *As You Like It* at Stockholm.

THREE PERIODICALS WHICH WILL be interesting and useful to persons who wish to keep up on what is currently being thought and written in England, India, and the Irish Free State are these: *The English Digest*, 1 Furnival Street, London, E.C. 4, one year, \$3.00; *India Digest*, 9 Cantonment, Ahmedabad 3, India, one year, 10 shillings; *The Irish Digest*, 43 Parkgate Street, Dublin, Ireland, one year, \$3.00.

"SHOULD THE SCHOOL PRESS BE Free?" by J. Ben Lieberman is a provocative article which appears in the October *California Journal of Secondary Education*. Lieberman thinks they should be free. "Student papers are sterile," he says, "only because they are put together in sterilized air." How on earth, he asks, can students be brought to an understanding of the importance and function of a free press, when the only one they really know, the student press, is a highly censored one? He takes up all the objections, one by one, and demolishes them wisely and sanely. He thinks there is a very little to lose and much to be gained for the paper, for the administration, for the educational institution, and, especially, for citizenship if the democratic concept of a free press is recognized and practiced in the

schools. It is better, he thinks, for the student paper to be an extra-curricular activity; better for it to be divorced from the journalism course, because then, if free, it really is a public servant, as a newspaper, for all its readers. Lieberman's main thesis and concern is this: that you can't raise students to assume the responsibilities of citizenship in a vacuum. You've got to give them responsibilities. A free school press, with the safeguards of a student staff carefully selected by a merit system, a faculty adviser who is that and absolutely without authority, and a code of ethics comparable to the "Canons of Journalism," can be a strong and important tool in training for citizenship in a democracy.

THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMISSION, supported by the NEA and the AASA, issued at its October meeting a strong protest against special loyalty oaths for teachers. Dwight D. Eisenhower and James B. Conant are members of this group. For a cross-section of newspaper opinion on this question address the Press and Radio Office, National Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

MANY MAGAZINES, BOTH EDUCATIONAL and literary, during the autumn months have run special articles in celebration of the ninetieth birthday of John Dewey (October 20). The *Saturday Review of Literature* of October 22 is a John Dewey issue, with an autobiographical essay by Dewey himself entitled "The Philosopher-in-the-Making"; articles on "Laboratory for Personhood," by John L. Childs and "Apprentice Citizens," by William H. Kilpatrick; a symposium on "The Making of Free Responsible Citizens," by three teachers, Rebecca M. Simonson, Florence Sweeney, and A. A. Suppan; and an editorial by Mark Storr on "The Philosopher as a Man of Action."

A HANDY SUMMARY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY of changing methods in the teaching

of language appears in the November *Childhood Education*, where Marie Baldridge discusses "Three Decades of Language Study." Research in the field of language is presented through a review of studies of the language itself, of steps in language growth, and of the psychological effects of early language. One common emphasis of great significance to the school which emerges from this survey is the close relationship which total intellectual growth bears to vocabulary.

"ADVENTURE IN APPRECIATION OF Poetry," by Annie E. Brower, in the *North Carolina English Teacher* for October, describes the very successful use of two NCTE-sponsored Columbia albums of recordings: *Appreciation of Poetry* and *Great Themes in Poetry*. Miss Brower went through the usual study of each poem with the class and then had the record played—and replayed as often as the discussion required. She admits that with a class already hostile to poetry the plan does not work so well and should be used only occasionally.

"THE PSYCHOLOGY OF COMPOSITION," by Amelia Roberts Fry, fills fourteen pages of the *Illinois English Bulletin*. In composition, even more obviously than in other schoolwork, the teacher can only help the student to learn. The motives that drive adults and children to action may be grouped under four heads: to master the situation, to associate with others (especially their age peers), to conform to social standards, and to investigate or experiment. Action of some kind will continue until these drives are satisfied; energy may be poured into composition (Mrs. Fry is thinking of writing only) if writing brings satisfaction of these needs. We must praise in some way, if only to say the title is good, each paper turned in—this to make the student feel he is at least partly mastering the situation. At the same time, we should note the errors and mark objectively, lest he think poor parts of his performance are satisfactory also. We must help him to see the cause of his errors,

especially when many of them spring from a single cause. We should set up partial goals near the student's weakness and give him a deadline, e.g., "Before your next theme, learn to put a comma between words in a series like these." To forestall forgetting, review tomorrow, at midterm, and at semester end.

Mrs. Fry gives four steps of the teacher's work: Prepare beforehand—a semester at a time, with refreshing before each lesson. Get to know each student as soon as possible. Make plans known to students. Make the assignment specific and clear.

Perhaps the most valuable page in this paper is the one which suggests *twenty merits* which the theme reader may look for in his effort to find something to praise. The whole paper is more helpful on theme-reading than on the pre-writing phases of the work.

THE ACCEPTABILITY OF THE FRE-quently proscribed expression "I feel *badly*" is examined at length by Lillian Mermin Feinsilver in *American Speech* for October. In a paper called "How Bad(ly) Do You Feel?" she cites the verdicts of the dictionaries, grammars, and handbooks—not entirely in agreement but on the whole against the usage. On the basis of her own considerable evidence she suggests that "feel badly" is more reputable than the majority of the authorities have supposed. Miss Feinsilver does not discuss the desirability of substituting "sorry," "sad," "ashamed," "humiliated," or even "much cut up," for either "bad" or "badly" after "feel."

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL for the Improvement of Reading Instruction will offer a program in connection with the AASA Convention in Atlantic City. At 2:00 P.M. on March 1, Emmett A. Betts will speak on "Approaches to Differentiated Guidance in Reading," and a panel, including William S. Gray, Gerald A. Yoakam, and Arthur I. Gates, will deal with the problems of differentiated instruction in reading.

"COMMUNISM AND FASCISM IN the Schools," by John J. De Boer, is the subject of the leading article in *School and Society*, October 29. American schools have the responsibility of educating for democracy, Mr. De Boer firmly believes, but he does not think they have the responsibility "of indoctrinating in behalf of capitalism, or the FCC, or the FHA, or the Federal Reserve system, or our present foreign policy." Education for democracy, he thinks, "implies that the school will consciously and systematically cultivate in youth a deep devotion to the fundamental value of the democratic society" but that doesn't mean the school should insulate youth from the realm of free controversy. He finds that the typical American school is not doing an effective job in teaching for democracy because it "is content with teaching the symbols of democracy rather than the realities for which they stand." It sets to youth the example of the dictator, its textbooks ignore controversial issues about which the members of a democratic society must make up their minds. Moreover, it reflects the views of a radio and press subservient to corporate interests. "Instead of objective, dispassionate analyses of the real issue, we read reports like those of the NEA Educational Policies Commission, which have now formally attempted to tie all educational institutions to the bipartisan political kite. Intellectual independence, the one distinguishing characteristic of the democratic school system, has been cashiered in favor of total mobilization in the cold war." The effort to stop communism by driving its symbols and doctrines underground, he thinks, "is like trying to stem an epidemic by incantation." What we need today, De Boer believes, is to return to the concept of a school as an educational institution, to examine the roots of communism and fascism, to know how they differ from each other, to compare them with the teachings of Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt, and, finally, to study the ways by which we can bring our own ideas into reality.

New Books

AMERICAN COLLEGE ENGLISH

*American College English*¹ will assuredly accomplish the purpose stated by its authors: to provide a year's work in English composition for college students. The book stresses the writing phase of communication, although there is a nod in the direction of general communications with a much-needed chapter on directions for reading, of special value in courses using a book of readings, and a chapter on speaking, admittedly basic and introductory.

Approximately half the book treats detailedly and completely the usual but necessary principles for background writing: manuscript, outline, grammar (special mention should be made of the thoroughness and helpfulness of the material on verbs), sentence, punctuation, dictionary use, spelling, vocabulary, and diction. Part I, "College Uses of English," is in addition an orientation to college writing: an early chapter on getting started, another chapter on note-taking and writing examinations, and the chapters on reading and speaking. Part II, "Handbook of Usage," begins with a ninety-page chapter on "Grammar," which brings together successfully all related materials under the appropriate heads: matters of correctness, clearness (such as reference of pronouns and dangling modifiers), and effectiveness (for example, use of passive voice) are discussed in detail as the respective parts of speech pass in review. The result is, therefore, conciseness, compression, and little repetition. In the discussion of English usage, the aim is not "imperative prescription" but "explanation"; constant distinctions are pointed out and illustrated between the appropriateness of colloquial and informal and that of formal usage.

¹ Harry R. Warfel, Ernst G. Mathews, and John C. Bushman, *American College English*. New York: American Book Co., 1949. Pp. xvi+656. \$3.50.

Part III, "Principles of Composition," utilizes the second half of the book for the more constructive side of writing, with attention to "the forms of writing expected of all college students, rather than those distinctively literary." Emphasis is placed on exposition, with twelve chapters giving direct aid on writing twelve types of exposition: news article, editorial, feature article, factual report, formal and informal essay, character sketch and biographical essay, research essay, book essays and reviews, and explanations of processes, mechanisms, and organizations. Description, narration, and argument—their principles and main subdivisions—are treated in one chapter each.

Far too much, one might say, for a year's work in composition; but, dependent upon taste, purpose, and interests, teacher and students can from this variety choose several areas for concentrated and continuing practice in writing.

This is not an easy book, partly because of its style, compression, and wealth of literary allusions and illustrations. Lower-fifth students as well as those in the lower part of the middle group will need to apply rigidly the directions given in the chapter on reading. But it is a not too difficult book. For the earnest and aspiring student-writer, the result can only be growth in fluency and effectiveness in writing, although he too will need to read carefully, pencil in hand, and underline important directions. Added insurance for facile use is an elaborate index of twenty pages, listing approximately 1,700 items; surely no student, not even the last of the lowest fifth, can say he has not known where to look for what he wants, or needs, to know.

In style, the book tends toward the formal side. Part of this formality is in keeping with one of the precepts: "The average college student needs training in the more for-

mal language of educated people." Part of it is in the point of view: some use is made of the direct "you" attitude, but usually the approach to the reader is either impersonal or that of the third person. And part of the formality is in accord with most of the illustrations. The various types of writing are amply demonstrated with materials by or relating to contemporary and classic writers, mostly American. Occasionally, one might question the utility for college students of the inclusion, for example, of such prose as a bank president's annual report to the stockholders. There are not many such. The final impression is that the authors have been generous in using the American classic writers to demonstrate their directions: Emerson, Harte, Hawthorne, Poe, Twain, and others. This in itself is a good thing: if students have forgotten these writers, let them recall them to mind; if they have not met them (a not entirely unbelievable condition) the early college years are none too soon for meeting and imitating the American masters. There is point in the first word of the title: "*American College English.*"

GEORGE S. WYKOFF

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LINGUISTIC SCIENCE FOR THE NOVICE

Linguistic science has developed such an impressive vocabulary and battery of techniques that its findings cannot be readily understood by the novice. In *Modern English and Its Heritage*¹ some of the accomplishments of recent language study as related to English have been incorporated, and the author, Dr. Margaret M. Bryant, has kept the untrained reader constantly in mind, making the subject matter both interesting and purposeful. She has been able to compress a great deal of the historical information usually found in language texts in such a way that the book can treat the pronunciation

¹ Margaret M. Bryant, *Modern English and Its Heritage*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1948. Pp. xii + 407. \$5.00.

and grammar of Modern English at length. It is a tribute to her ingenuity that she has been able to do this without writing a mere synopsis or subordinating the historical background unduly.

The book includes a historical account of the language from its Indo-European origins, phonology, grammar, word formation, and semantics. The chapters are short, apparently designed for a single day's recitation. They are accompanied by lists of suggested readings, questions for class discussion, and topics for research papers. These supplementary materials are well chosen and should lighten the work of the instructor considerably; however, the teaching aids need not be assigned *in extenso* for the book to be usable.

Unfortunately, from the linguist's point of view, some oversimplification may be necessary at the elementary level in order to meet the time limitations of a course. This very real pedagogical problem is illustrated by Dr. Bryant's handling of the phoneme (pp. 101-2). She bases her discussion on Leonard Bloomfield's definition, "a minimum unit of distinctive sound-feature,"² and her statement, "the group of symbols which provides one sign for each phoneme is a phonetic alphabet."³ But the alphabet used by Dr. Bryant is not completely phonemic, since it includes the pairs [ʌ, ə]—the sounds of *u* in *cut* and *a* in *sofa*—and [ɔ, ɔ̄]—the *ur* of *curl* and *or* of *error*. The first member of each of these pairs occurs only in stressed syllables, while the second occurs only in unstressed syllables. This distributional restriction does not permit the stressed sounds to contrast with the unstressed ones; therefore they cannot be different phonemes, even though it might be worth while to use different symbols for them in beginning phonetics work.

An extensive analysis of the text is not possible here, but the following examples indicate that the instructor must be ready to

² Leonard Bloomfield, *Language* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1933), p. 79.

³ Cf. Bloomfield's statement (*ibid.*, p. 85).

supplement it with the research of other linguists:

Page 48: ". . . the mountaineers of the southeastern United States have held on to some of the Shakespearian English of more than three hundred years ago that their ancestors brought over with them." This belief, which is quite current in the United States, will need to be re-examined in the light of the evidence found in *The Linguistic Atlas of the South Atlantic States*.

Page 53: "The Normans found English a synthetic, highly inflected language like Greek, Latin, and Modern German, but when they had finished putting their imprint upon it, it was an analytic language, with rapidly disappearing inflections, like Modern French." This seems to be an overstatement of the Norman influence on the structure of the language.

Page 135: "Many phoneticians call this," i.e. [e] as in *eight*, "along with all the other so-called 'long vowels,' a diphthong rather than a pure vowel, transcribing [ei] instead of [e]. It is true that these words may be pronounced with a diphthong, but in General American the pure vowel is probably more frequent and is to be considered standard." This statement has not, as yet, been borne out by the *Linguistic Atlas* field records made in the "General American" speech area.

The word *write* is transcribed [wrait] on pages 147 and 240. *Guinea* is transcribed with [i] for the final vowel on page 179, but *woody* and *lovely* are said to have [i] for the final (p. 135). These examples show a possible confusion of spelling with pronunciation.

In spite of shortcomings of this kind, the text reflects Dr. Bryant's appreciation of the social nature of language, and it will help produce an enlightened attitude toward matters of correctness. For this reason, as well as its inclusiveness, *Modern English and Its Heritage* should become an important handbook for the English language, especially in the one-semester courses taught in our undergraduate schools.

A. L. DAVIS

WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

ANTHOLOGY OF EUROPEAN LITERATURE

The Heritage of European Literature, a two-volume anthology of some fifteen hundred double-column pages, begins with Homer and ends with Dolmatovsky. The editors have worked on the following policy: the omission of the Bible, the avoidance of snippets, a preference for idiomatic translations, and the exclusion of English writers. A notable feature of the book is the inclusion of about 275 pages of Russian literature. The *Heritage* is arranged chronologically under these headings: "Greece," "Rome," "Middle Ages," "Renaissance," "Age of Reason," "Nineteenth Century," and "Twentieth Century." Within these sections the texts are distributed in terms of chronology, nationality, and literary type. This scheme works out very well in the earlier periods, but for the nineteenth century the result is as follows: Heine; French poetry (Hugo, Baudelaire, Verlaine); French fiction (Balzac, Mérimée, Flaubert, Maupassant, Zola, France); German philosophy (Nietzsche); Norse drama (Ibsen's *Wild Duck*); and Russian literature before the Soviet era.

The *Heritage* is really a storehouse of texts not selected or arranged according to any particular pedagogical strategy or a peculiar definition of literature and literary history. It is therefore difficult to appraise the book: one could only judge the course which a given teacher will draw from it. It will protect an instructor against his crotchets, but it may dampen the enthusiasms which are so essential to effective teaching. For example, it will guard against the undue depreciation or even total neglect of literary history which some zealots of the Great Books fall into; but it may handicap the teacher who believes, rightly, that the signal Russian contribution during the past century was in the novel. This instructor may not find the stories and excerpts from Turgenev, Dostoevski, Gogol, and Tolstoi adequate, even though they are judiciously chosen. The *Heritage* will serve as a salutary

check upon the teacher who so exaggerates the sociological implications of literature that it becomes an adjunct to social studies. The *Heritage* does not reduce masterpieces to documents in the history of a society; it does not include the *Communist Manifesto*. Similarly, it will brace up the instructor who, because of his anxiety about One World, ends with a smattering of everything and a vaporous cosmopolitanism. This anthology does not circle the globe with brief pauses at Lu, Athens, and Walden Pond; it provides seventeen catos of the *Inferno*, two plays by Molière, and all of *Faust: I*, *William Tell*, and *Candide*. But the teacher who believes that the study of literature should cut across national and linguistic lines will have to use additional texts for English and American authors. The

instructor who is preoccupied with problems in literary genetics and influences will be held within bounds by the *Heritage*, for it omits Plutarch, Plautus, Ariosto, and Tasso.

In sum, this anthology is an excellent one of its kind. And we teachers of literature can hardly expect editors and publishers to give us a different kind until we have resolved such questions as these: What is the basic purpose in courses variously entitled comparative literature, world literature, and general literature? Is such a course to be given in one year or in two years? What relative emphasis is to be placed upon genre study, literary history, and ideas?

ROYAL A. GETTMANN

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Brief Reviews

Professional

Herman Melville. By RICHARD CHASE. Macmillan. Pp. 305. \$4.50.

An adventurous excursion through the vast depths of all of Melville's works from first to last and including the short stories and poems. From Mr. Chase's illumination of his symbols and ideas, there emerges a Melville who seems much nearer to our own time than formerly, a writer who is much less a heroic failure than a political thinker who feared that America would lose her creative drive but never abandoned hope that she would not fail in her fated role.

Melville's Use of the Bible. By NATHALIA WRIGHT. Duke University Press. Pp. 201. \$3.50.

Melville's literary debt to the Bible is explored by Miss Wright, who has had the advantage of being able to use the markings and marginalia of the recently discovered Melville Family Bible, the only extant copy of the Old Testament owned by him.

Milton's Samson and the Christian Tradition. By F. MICHAEL KROUSE. Princeton University Press. Pp. 159. \$3.75.

A study of Milton's play in the light of the biblical commentaries from which Milton might have derived many of his conceptions. Krouse feels that the poem has not been well understood because it is

built upon the thinking of a day that is gone and that that point of thinking has not yet been recaptured. This he attempts to do, by reconstructing the tradition which grew up around Samson at different periods from the pre-Christian Era through the Reformation, and by following Samson's development as a symbol in the Christian mind in scriptural criticism, poetry, and plays. When Krouse discusses the poem in relation to this reacquired tradition, *Samson Agonistes* appears the climax and fulfilment of the cycle begun with *Paradise Lost*.

Elizabethan Lyrics. Edited and arranged by NORMAN AULT. Sloane. Pp. 560. \$5.00.

A classic collection long out of print now revised in the light of most recent textual and bibliographical discoveries. Includes 640 diverse poems, with love poetry predominating. Louis Untermeyer considers it "as near a perfect anthology as the imperfect human mind can devise."

Ten English Farces. Edited by LEO HUGHES and A. H. SCOUTEN. University of Texas Press. Pp. 286.

A collection of representative Restoration and eighteenth-century farces once highly popular, often through several generations, such as *A Duke and No Duke* and *The Devil To Pay*. Long out of print, these are now made accessible to students of the theater.

The Romantic Imagination. By C. M. BOWRA. Harvard University Press. Pp. 306. \$4.50.

Reading this volume will be most rewarding for all who care about poetry, and most of all for those who are interested in the works of Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley. The purpose of the book is to show the importance of the imagination to the great English Romantic poets. In so doing, Mr. Bowra, who is professor of poetry at Oxford, shows how the Romantic poets actually worked, what material they used, how they transformed it to their special needs, and what their ideas of poetry were. Originally given as the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard.

The Goliard Poets: Medieval Latin Songs and Satires in New Verse Translations. By GEORGE F. WHICHER. New Directions. Pp. 303. \$7.50.

The Goliards, in their heyday, about the middle of the twelfth century, were the ecclesiastical equivalent of jongleurs and court jesters, rebellious against authority and sometimes against decency. The poems here derive from neither great minds nor great imaginations, but they do provide a documentary footnote to medieval history.

Shakespeare Survey. II. Edited by ALLARDYCE NICOLL. Harvard University Press. Pp. 163. \$3.75.

The second annual survey of Shakespearean study and production issued under the sponsorship of the University of Birmingham, The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, and The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Includes a survey of "Shakespeare in France: 1900-1948" by Henri Fluchère and one on "Fifty Years of Shakespearean Production: 1898-1948" by M. St. Clare Byrne, a study of the "Trend of Shakespeare Scholarship" by Hardin Craig, studies of individual plays, and an account of the year's contributions to Shakespearean study. Well illustrated.

The Classical Tradition. By GILBERT HIGET. Oxford University Press. Pp. 763. \$6.00.

A study of the chief ways in which Greek and Latin influences have molded the literatures of western Europe and America. The process has been continuous from about the eighth century to the present day. As Professor Hight says, no single book could give a complete description of the process, and there

isn't even an outline of it in existence. This work is an endeavor to provide such an outline.

Religion and Education under the Constitution. By J. M. O'NEILL. Harper's. Pp. 338. \$4.00.

This book, in the words of its author, "is aimed specifically at a better understanding of civil liberties and against the widespread practice of attempting to foreclose debate and to stop the democratic process by distorting the Constitutional provisions in the Bill of Rights." Professor O'Neill has just ended twelve years as member, and four as chairman, of the Committee on Academic Freedom of the American Civil Liberties Union. This volume, a direct outgrowth of his experience on that committee, provides a challenging analysis of recent court decisions interpreting the historic intent of the Constitution on the separation of church and state. Appendixes include the text of such historic documents as the Bill of Rights and Jefferson's Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom in Virginia, as well as excerpts from the Supreme Court opinions in the Everson and the McCollum cases.

The Admonition Controversy. By DONALD JOSEPH McGINN. Rutgers University Press. Pp. 589.

The Admonition Controversy marks the beginning of literary exchanges between the Puritans and the Episcopalians. The purpose of this study is to provide students of English literature with the basic facts in the struggle between the Puritans and the Church of England. Part I presents an objective analysis of the background of the controversy; Part II, representative selections from the various pamphlets of the two chief contestants, Cartwright and Whitgift.

The Market for College Graduates. By SEYMOUR E. HARRIS. Harvard University Press. Pp. 207. \$4.00.

Mr. Harris anticipates that by 1968 there will be a minimum of from ten to fifteen million college graduates, two or three for every job commensurate with their training. He warns that unless millions of parents take action to influence intelligent educational policy we shall have a bitter, frustrated intelligentsia with resulting tensions. He analyzes present and future outlets for college graduates and makes constructive suggestions as to how we can meet the problems both of the present and of the future.

Nonfiction

The Story of Language. By MARIO PEI. Lippincott. \$5.00.

A comprehensive and authoritative treatment of language, its structure, development, problems, etc. Entertaining and instructive for the general reader.

The Theatre Book of the Year, 1948-1949: A Record and an Interpretation. By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN. Knopf. \$4.00.

The writer covers every play and musical show produced in the period. Each program is reproduced,

and each play and its staging are described and evaluated.

The Crooked Corridor: A Study of Henry James. By ELIZABETH STEVENSON. Macmillan. Pp. 163. \$2.75.

Miss Stevenson says, "James' central idea was one he had lived in his own flesh: the collision of the imaginative individual with society." Her study is built around that idea.

Radio and Poetry. By MILTON ALLEN KAPLAN. Columbia University Press. Pp. 333. \$4.50.

A pioneer study in a special field of radio. Nearly half the book is devoted explicitly to the sole topic of verse plays. The organization is historical and descriptive, the author's evaluations appearing only incidentally or by implication.

Albert Schweitzer: Genius in the Jungle. By JOSEPH GOLLOMB. Vanguard. \$2.75.

Biography of a man famous as physician, musician, author, and spiritual leader, who left the honors and comforts of civilization and devoted his life to the natives of West Africa. This is the story of his life among savages and cannibals ridden by superstition and disease. Inspiring reading, a true story of honor and unselfishness.

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Authority and the Individual. By BERTRAND RUSSELL. Simon & Schuster. \$2.00.

"How can we combine that degree of individual initiative necessary for progress with the degree of social cohesion necessary for survival?" Six Reith Lectures. Penetrating discussions of the vital problem, the Individual vs. Authority.

The Demon Lover: A Psychoanalytical Approach to Literature. By ARTHUR WORMHOUDT. Foreword by EDMUND BERGLER. Exposition Press. Pp. 155. \$3.50.

The author believes that experiences disclosed in poetry are those which every individual has experienced—childhood-parent relationships. He has attempted to apply the newer findings of psychoanalytic psychiatry to the Romantic poets and discusses the "drives" evidenced in familiar poems of five well-known authors. He says, "Great poems . . . express the unconscious patterns and conflicts which underlie everyone's mental life."

This I Remember. By ELEANOR ROOSEVELT. Harper. \$4.50.

Reminiscences of the Roosevelt years from the early 20's to F. D. R.'s death in 1945. The book is about her husband, their family, his administrations, and her experiences as first lady. Yet the real fascination of the book is the revelation of a remarkable woman. Admiration for her lingers in the reader's mind.

A Sort of Saga. By BILL MAULDIN. Sloane. \$3.50.

Pop, father of the author, was always looking for greener pastures and had very clever ideas about where and how to find them. Bill and Sid and their long-suffering mother patiently endured tourist camps, swamps, and sojourns in Mexico, New Mexico, Arizona, or wherever Pop's "projects" led him. High adventure. Illustrated.

North African Notebook. By ROBIN MAUGHAM. Harcourt. \$3.00.

The author had studied Arab affairs for six years and traveled extensively in North Africa, where he recently spent six months journeying through Arab lands. His interest lay in the personal response of the Arab people and their reactions to alien political interference and rule. The conclusions which he draws seem sound.

From Cave Painting to Comic Strip: A Kaleidoscope of Human Communication. By LANCELOT HOG-BEN. Chanticleer. Pp. 286. \$5.00.

The history of man from the painting of his first pictures—about 25,000 B.C. Twenty pages in full color; 211 in black and white. Good print. Fascinating in text and illustrations.

Characteristically American. By RALPH BARTON PERRY. Knopf. \$3.00.

The content of these five lectures is indicated with unusual accuracy by their titles: "The American Cast of Mind"; "The Development of American Thought"; "William James and American Individualism"; "The American Religious Heritage"; and "American Democracy." Professor Emeritus Perry finds us strong individualists but believers in collective action.

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"The purpose of this book is to help the American people and the entire free world to understand the Soviet Union. . . . The fortunes of ourselves and all

mankind are closely linked with the course of Soviet foreign policy during the years ahead." Both authors are on the faculty of Teachers College, Columbia University. Professor Counts has been a student of Russian affairs for thirty years. Mrs. Lodge was born in Russia, daughter of a Russian lawyer. Both have acted on many important committees.

Fiction and Poetry

The Way West. By A. B. GUTHRIE, JR. Sloane. \$3.50.

In 1945, a hundred-odd men, women, and children assembled at Independence, Missouri, as others before had done, to undertake the perilous drive to Oregon. We learn to know and admire this wagon-train family, to forgive their human failings, and to commend their desperate perseverance and their good qualities. Colorful, good history, well-drawn characters. An American book that should always be stimulating reading. By the author of *The Big Sky*. October Book-of-the-Month selection.

The Long Love. By JOHN SEDGES. Day. \$3.00.

There is much speculation as to the author of this book, as Sedges is a pseudonym. Edward Haslaat, son of a middle-class family, at twenty-two marries Margaret Seaton, of a wealthy aristocratic family. He promises himself and his bride that his marriage shall always come first. He enters his father's small printing shop, dominates and enlarges it, and becomes successful in a business way. He seems a rather dull, quiet fellow. Margaret is said to be very clever, original, bright. They live together for forty years. There is not much to show that the family lives richly, but Edward and Margaret are well-drawn characters. Wider family relationships are particularly well developed: the aging of the parents, marriages, and social changes. November Literary Guild selection.

The Old Oaken Bucket. By BELLAMY PARTRIDGE. Crowell. \$3.00.

The story of a dilapidated old home, its history, real and fancied. The clubwomen who wanted it, the Yankee who got it, the young people who needed it, are delightfully tangled in this clever hilarious social satire.

The Plum Tree. By MARY ELLEN CHASE. Macmillan. \$2.00.

The plum tree blossoms one spring day on the lawn of a home for aged women. Its beauty is a symbol of youth and love. Two middle-aged women are in charge. Some of the old ladies are quietly happy and contented. Three are confused. The action takes place in one day and concerns the three sad old women. There are pathos, wisdom, and great human sympathy and compassion.

Prince of Egypt. By DOROTHY CLARKE WILSON. Westminster. \$3.50.

A tale of Moses, boy and young man, an Egyptian nobleman and very conscious of his position. A colorful, fascinating picture of Egypt of the Pharaohs, luxury for the favored few, grinding poverty and want for the workers who numbered millions. The climax, of course, is the spiritual development of Moses as he grew older and understood the sufferings of his people and his creation of a new nation. Many of the problems of the Egypt of 3,000 years ago are similar to those of today. Dramatic love interest. Long.

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Joanna McIntyre, red-headed Presbyterian schoolteacher, Scottish descent, married kindly Gunnar Wicklund, widower, middle-aged rich Ohio manufacturer. Strangely enough, Joanna seems to have become quite worldly wise and head of the family as wealth and power grew. The son of this pair is a "split personality." A family novel; many characters. From 1893 to the present.

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Modern American Dramas. Edited by HARLAN HATCHER. Harcourt. New ed.

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In Sicily. By ELIO VITTORINI. New Directions. \$2.50.

In his introduction Ernest Hemingway calls Vittorini one of the very best of the new Italian writers. This is a story of a man who has been living in a big city and returns to the village where his mother is leading a simple peasant life, as do the other villagers. The style is lyrical and compassionate.

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Fifty-five Short Stories from the New Yorker. Simon & Schuster. \$4.00.

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Murder by Gaslight. Edited by EDWARD WAGENKNECHT. Prentice-Hall. Pp. 435. \$3.95.

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Pamphlets

The Theatre Annual. Edited by WILLIAM VAN LENNEP and ASSOCIATES. The Theatre Library Association (P.O. Box 935, Grand Central Station, New York 17). Pp. 103. \$1.50.

Five diverse papers: "Walter Hampden as Seen on the Stage" (H. T. Parker); "The English Actor's Fight for Respectability" (Drew B. Pallette); "The Playwright and the Press: Elmer Rice and His Critics" (Ralph L. Collins); "The Making of a Great Actor—William Charles Macready" (Alan Downer);

and "Scenery on the Early American Stage" (Clifford E. Hamar).

What Shall We Read about the Movies, Radio and Audio-visual Methods? By WILLIAM LEWIN. The Audio-visual Guide (1630 Springfield Avenue, Maplewood, N. J.). Pp. 12. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " X 11". \$0.25.

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